

**Título**  
OVERCOMING A CHALLENGE

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I want to be a teacher, I got it clear, I want to master the language, I need it. But, what kind of teacher should I be? Throughout my life I have known many teachers and every one of them have given something to me. Then, many years later when I am who is being training to be the teacher of someone else, remind me of all those situations when I just said "I hate this teacher or I love my teacher". Nowadays, I can say "I want to be the best" at least not for everyone, simply the best.

Everything started in my school time; I had a clear mindset about what I wanted to be and do professionally; I thought about the idea of languages as an economic alternative. Much of my school process was carried out in a higher normal school, it was there that I began to understand that I found a taste for teaching. In this life cycle I had teachers who influenced this stage because their knowledge and teaching methodology made me see things in a different way, so much so that I came to think that I wanted to be like them. On the other hand, the preparation that I had for learning to teach was originated from that time at normal school; it was there that I began to take the first steps in this field of education. On a personal level, the fact of wanting to be a teacher, it was already the beginning of that preparation, of that long road that I was waiting to travel. I always thought about the idea on how to teach, in what would be the best way to treat my students and so for a while I spent time observing my teachers and asked them about how they had gotten to where they were; it was that simple curiosity the one that gave me an initial perspective of what I should and should not do when I was a teacher.

A lot of time later, when I was able to start my professional career as I had always wanted, I was filled with expectations regarding the idea of being in front of a classroom teaching English. Although it was a process in which I had to be patient, I still wanted to keep moving forward. I always thought of all the times that I was a teacher even if it was just practicing, and I came to the conclusion that this time I would do it better, with less mistakes and with more life experience. My expectations

were that, to face and challenge again the fears that teaching entailed, but above of all I created in my mind the ideal teacher I wanted to be, based on all the people I had admired in my life, always looking for what to take from them to apply it to the future experiences that awaited me as a teacher. For the reasons mentioned before, reaching the English program was a big life decision, but more than anything a decision by vocation; from the very beginning my personal projection was focused on teaching, on being in charge of a group sharing with them a specific knowledge, something that I would love to learn too, in this case English.

By the time I started teaching, I was even full of ideals about this profession, and most of all I thought about the students and the expectations they would have of me. In the first practicum classes that I gave in a public school, I realized that I was a charismatic person because otherwise those students would not have expressed how good they felt every time they were in class with me. These comments served as a trigger and that made me feel surer of what I was doing. In my first class groups, I met guys with all kinds of thoughts, with lifestyles and beliefs that I did not expect to find, I even met teachers who through their experience, gave me advice on how to carry out my teaching process. It is worth mentioning that all that diversity of students, contexts and the variety of learning styles gave me a different perspective of what it was like to take a class to a classroom. In this part, my process of learning to plan from the needs and abilities of my students began. I had to learn, read, ask and look for information on how to make a need analysis of the context; I needed to include the social reality of the institution in my planning. According to Iwai et al. (1999), the term needs analysis generally refers to the activities that are involved in collecting information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the needs of a particular group of students. The theory explains to you in extraordinary ways what needs analysis is about, but it is in the praxis when you check what it really is. It is necessary to understand the needs of that specific environment and adapt them in the planning, with the main intention of knowing what the limits are and what the students require. It was a

process that made me question myself and if what I was teaching actually served my students, or how I could make the knowledge understandable for them; it was something that made me think about methodologies, what to use, how, why and what for.

I remember one of my first classes, in my pedagogical practice; I had to teach a class about a certain grammatical subject in a primary grade; I had a great lesson plan sufficient material and above all a good attitude, so I began to develop my class and everything was working in a wonderful way. At a certain point, a small boy began to ask in a continuous way and although I repeated him the answers, he remained without understanding anything, and in the end it was me who did not understand what was happening with me or what was wrong with that little boy; and in that way, I spent a lot of time trying to make him understand the topic. Later I understood that as that child, I would find many more, and the biggest challenge I had, was to learn how to deal with the so-called special educational needs. I've always known that a learning process was meaningful when I could it relate with the student's previous knowledge or when it could be demonstrated to them; and that is the reason why, every time I planned any class, I always thought about what I could use or do so that students could assimilate that knowledge. Most of my classes were characterized by being visual, I used resources that could connect that learning with their reality and their needs, but most important, because of their different learning styles.

Over time, my experience was increasing, my weak points became my strengths and where each day represented another lesson in this teaching / learning process. At the beginning I taught based in the previous knowledge and what I've learned from the way I saw my teachers teach; the most important of all was the self-knowledge, I learned to manage the authority, to have the management of the class without forgetting that to generate respect for my students should not be confused with fear, I learned that affection is the solution to the great majority of matters that arise in the classroom, and despite what I had learned, I still had things to improve;

and something that I call my greatest weakness, was the fact that even though I wanted to help all my students, it would be difficult. Through all this acquisition of experience I had to face a lot of fears; fear of how the students would receive me, fear of how they would see me, fear of not being what they expected and fear of me not being what I wanted for myself. I have learned to face this teaching experience being aware that I am not just a person with knowledge, I am also a human being who is afraid of making mistakes, but in this process, life experiences are part of a lesson in which sometimes we won't have an explanation on how to carry it out.

Through my teacher training, all the knowledge I've acquired, the perceptions of life that I've seen in other people, the teachers I've met in this process, showed me that this work might not be easy but at the same time they let me know that it would be so gratifying as to move forward without fear, as well as to think that I could become equal or better than those teachers for whom I had spent my life admiring. It was indeed and it has been an arduous process, but the greatest wealth in knowledge and experience that I have had in this part of my life. In my current process, I always reflect about my practicum, and how I am leading this teaching / learning process, and I can say that although it is not perfect I am doing it well, but it is simply about doing things right from the beginning, being prepared for giving the class, and therefore I emphasize that planning for me is crucial in this process, everything can be improvised less knowledge, and that is why as a teacher, I need to strengthen and develop all those necessary skills for a better performance in this educational environment.

Finally, In the institution where I am doing my practicum, the lack of resources has always been one of the biggest limitations I have had to face; I also supported a teacher who pretended to teach English but who had never had a satisfactory learning of it, and although at first my knowledge caused him a little rejection towards me, at the end of the process it became a learning opportunity for him. The most satisfactory aspect of this process has been to recognize that there are no limits to

teaching and much less to design satisfactory classes, and that is exactly what I want to achieve and what I think about every time I plan. Sometimes I would like to teach my students all those things they want to learn but it is well known that there are some standards which must be carried out and it is at this point that I think sometimes students are not given what they really need, and maybe it is still a thought, because as a teacher I know that I also have to adjust to all types of rules and understand that educating society is the biggest challenge for those of us who decided to be teachers.

## References

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