

From one-word utterances to complete sentences: an English teaching experience in primary education

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Resumo

Este artigo descreve um projeto de investigação-ação desenvolvido no contexto do Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 1.º Ciclo do Ensino Básico, na Universidade de Lisboa. O projeto foi concretizado com uma turma do 4.º ano constituída por 24 alunos, durante dez aulas de 45 minutos, numa escola urbana. Procurou abordar o facto de a maioria dos alunos dar respostas breves na interação em sala de aula, manifestando dificuldade em produzir frases completas. De modo a ajudar os alunos a ultrapassar essa dificuldade, o projeto incluiu um conjunto de atividades orais baseadas em jogos de adivinhação, jogos de representação, apresentações orais, uma história, canções e vídeos, atividades essas desenhadas para levar os alunos a praticar a produção oral de frases completas. Com base na implementação do projeto e nos dados recolhidos, pode-se concluir que, embora a produção oral seja um desafio para as crianças, com tarefas e atividades que sejam motivadoras, modelem a produção de frases completas e proporcionem apoio à compreensão e à produção (e.g. recorrendo a texto escrito, materiais autênticos, ajudas visuais e a um professor colaborativo), os alunos mostram-se capazes de ir além de respostas breves e construir frases completas.

Palavras-chave: investigação-ação, competências de oralidade, prática de ensino supervisionada, ensino do Inglês no 1.º Ciclo do Ensino Básico.

Abstract

This article depicts an action research project developed within the context of the Master's Degree in Teaching English at Primary School, at the University of Lisbon. The project was carried out in a fourth-grade class of 24 pupils, for ten 45-minute lessons, in an urban school, and it intended to address the fact that pupils mostly provided one-word answers during classroom interaction, expressing difficulty in the production of complete sentences. To help the class go beyond one-word answers, the project included a set of oral activities based on guessing games, role plays, oral presentations, a story, songs, and videos, all designed for learners to practice speaking in full sentences. Based on the implementation of the project and the data collected, it may be concluded that although speaking presents a challenge to young learners, with

motivating tasks and activities that model full sentences as well as provide participants with plenty of support for understanding and production (e.g., by making use of written text, *realia*, visual aids and a supportive teacher), learners are able to go beyond one-word utterances and build complete sentences.

Keywords: action-research, speaking skills, supervised teaching practice, teaching English in primary education.

Contextualization: the supervised teaching practice at the University of Lisbon

The development of an enquiry stance about teaching and pedagogy in general has long been at the core of the debate around the curriculum of pre-service teacher education, as has also been the case in Portugal (Alarcão, 2001; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). The fact that the qualification for teaching is obtained at a master's level since the Bologna Reform led to changes in how the teaching practicum is understood and operationalized. According to official regulations, student teachers are asked to elaborate a teaching practice report, to be defended publicly and which usually incorporates a research-based teaching experience.

At the University of Lisbon, the Master's Degree in Teaching English at Primary School is organized in three semesters (90 ECTS), each one of them comprising a course unit titled 'Initiation to Professional Practice' (IPP). This course unit corresponds to weekly seminars at the university, conducted by a university teacher/supervisor, and periods of time in the school where the teaching practice takes place. Such supervised teaching practice follows a progressive-interactive model of observation-experimentation-reflection/evaluation in a partner school (Table 1) and intends to foster student teachers' professional learning intertwined with the adoption of a research stance, according to which student teachers develop not only practice-focused research dispositions, but also competences in pedagogical research (Alarcão, 2001; Cochran-Smith, & Lytle, 1999; Ponte, 2002). Such progressive-interactive model also seeks to create opportunities for student teachers to integrate practice and theory, and make sense of experiential, tacit knowledge, particularly through self-reflection and dialogue with peers.

Table 1. The teaching practice model and dynamics

IPP1	IPP2	IPP3
1 st semester (Year 1)	2 nd semester (Year 1)	3 rd semester (Year 2)
<p>Main activities</p> <p>Context observation and documental analysis</p> <p>Contact with the class group</p> <p>Observation of the cooperating teacher's classes</p> <p>Supporting the cooperating teacher in classroom dynamics</p> <p>Teaching of two to three lessons autonomously</p> <p>Definition of a topic (issue resulting from observation and/or student teacher's interest) to foreground the experimentation in IPP2</p>	<p>Main activities</p> <p>Literature review on the selected topic/issue</p> <p>Design of a didactic unit or project</p> <p>Design of data collection instruments</p> <p>Development of the didactic unit / project with the class group (same one of IPP1) (around 7,5 hours) + Gathering of practice- and pupils' related data</p> <p>Writing of critical accounts based on the on-going teaching practice</p>	<p>Main activities</p> <p>Deeper analysis and systematization of the collected data</p> <p>Writing of the teaching practice report</p> <p>Viva rehearsal and coaching</p> <p>Presentation of the report + Public defense and discussion + assessment</p>
<p>Products</p> <p>Description of the school context and the class group</p> <p>Lesson plans and resources/materials, and reflective accounts</p>	<p>Products</p> <p>Lesson plans and resources/materials</p> <p>Reflective accounts</p> <p>Dataset</p>	<p>Products</p> <p>Teaching practice report</p>
<p>Education dynamics</p> <p>Supervisory seminars and conferences at the university</p> <p>Supervisory conferences at school, with the cooperating teacher</p>		<p>Education dynamics</p> <p>Seminars and conferences at the university: support for project writing (supervisor); coaching for the <i>viva</i> (supervisor and fellow student teachers)</p>

By adopting and incorporating an experiential, enquiry-based cycle into the teaching practice (usually through practitioner-, action-research), this model intends to help student teachers become “active contributors to the development of their own knowledge about practice” (Bullock, 2016, p. 379), more aware of contrasting messages they come across with during their program, and of their own role in learning how to teach. Ultimately, together with other curriculum components (e.g. general educational units), it aspires to foster student teachers’ rationality about the situated, social nature of educational practices, and the importance of embracing a transformative, critical stance in their own teaching (Carr and Kemmis, 1986).

In this article, one such experience is depicted, by reporting the action research project developed by the first author in her Supervised Teaching Practice (Silva, 2019) and supervised by the third author. By adopting an I-position in discourse, the following

sections will report on the trajectory of a student teacher in the development of the project during her teaching practice in an urban school. First, she provides information about the teaching context and how she identified a practice-related research issue, then she moves on to how the literature supported her pedagogical reasoning and to the description of the action-taking steps. Finally, she concludes with the critical assessment of her teaching practice and experience.

Looking into the context of practice and identifying the issue

My Supervised Teaching Practice took place at a public school that offers preschool, kindergarten, and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd cycles of Basic Education (grades 1 to 9). Most students come from working class families, and by dealing closely with the learners' families, the school creates an environment in which there is no dropout.

The target group of the project was a fourth-grade class of 24 students, 13 boys and 11 girls, who were between nine and ten years old. This was a multicultural class with learners from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including from Eastern European and African countries. Concerning their grades, at the end of the second term, there were two students who had "Very good", twenty either "Good" or "Sufficient", and two "Insufficient". Moreover, four students ran the risk of repeating the fourth grade. Behavior-wise, the class was unstable and confrontational, with episodes of verbal and physical aggression.

Regarding English, this group had learned English since the third grade and seemed to enjoy English classes. There were two or three students who appeared to be highly motivated and independent, since they would finish the proposed exercises early and ask for more tasks. In terms of materials and resources, as observed, the class preferred using visual materials and music.

As a whole, this group was very communicative and loved interaction. In accordance with the descriptors included in the *Metas Curriculares de Inglês Ensino Básico: 1.º, 2.º e 3.º Ciclos* (Bravo et al., 2015) and the global scale of *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001), the learners' English proficiency corresponded to the A1 basic user level. The classes were conducted in both English and Portuguese. Nonetheless, I observed that, when learners answered in English, they would

mostly provide one-word answers and would not produce complete sentences. Furthermore, I did not see learners perform spoken peer interaction. These problems, combined with the fact that the *Programa de Generalização do Ensino de Inglês no 1.º Ciclo do Ensino Básico* (Bento et al., 2005) recommends speaking should be practiced regularly and that, according to the cooperating teacher, parents expected their children to leave the English class knowing how to speak English, led me to choose the development of oral production as the didactic issue to be explored.

Consulting the literature

Once the didactic issue was identified, I performed a literature review to find out how foreign language oral production developed in young learners and what types of activities could be applied to foster it.

According to several authors, namely Cameron (2001), Linse (2005) and Nunan (2011), in order to promote foreign language oral skills in young learners, the teaching-learning process has to take their cognitive and social development into consideration, respect what they can do in their first language, make the meaning of the words and expressions being used accessible, take their previous knowledge and experience into account, expose them to as much aural target language as possible, and allow them to take part in discourse, as well as develop the knowledge and skills for participation in speech.

However, for young learners to participate in speech, the learning tasks should help them in several ways. Pictures, for instance, can provide support for understanding (Phillips, 1993; Ur, 2015). Literacy level appropriate written texts displayed in front of the speakers, reminding them of what they have to say, may help with both understanding and production (Cameron, 2001; Ur, 2015). Topics that relate to their personal interests allowing them to draw on their own ideas and experiences can provide support for performance (Cameron, 2001; Ur, 1996). Tasks that give learners something to contribute to, such as a final product (Ur, 2015), or which possess a clear purpose, such as a communicative or interpersonal one (Cameron, 2001), can likewise give them a reason to speak. The structure of the task may support production as well. Opportunities to practice the target structures in a repetitive way may increase learners' confidence in using those structures (Harmer, 2015). Additionally, the teacher, by showing s/he is interested in what

the student is saying and by asking questions that encourage the learner to continue talking, may also support production (Scrivener, 2011).

Some of the activities and resources that may be useful to develop foreign language oral skills in young learners are games, role plays, short oral presentations, stories, songs, and videos.

Games are a real-life activity to children (Kopzhasarova & Daulet, 2016; Linse, 2005) and, when used in the classroom, may provide purposeful repetition of target language structures and patterns (Linse, 2005; Nunan, 2011). Furthermore, because they are familiar and amusing to young learners, these may feel more at ease to use the foreign language (Kopzhasarova & Daulet, 2016). Nonetheless, it is essential to make sure they know the models they are supposed to use before starting the game (op. cit.). If the aim is to get them to produce longer utterances, according to Ur (2015), guessing games are especially beneficial.

Role play is another activity that is authentic and enjoyable to children. Through it, young learners can practice target language structures that may be useful to them now or at a later stage in their lives (Linse, 2005; Ur, 2015). Moreover, role plays can stimulate fluency and give shy students more confidence to speak, as they can pretend to be someone else (Harmer, 2015). One way of helping young learners perform role plays is by providing them with pre-set texts they can rehearse and then read aloud while performing (Ur, 2015). This type of support allows them to become more familiar with longer texts, which sometimes they end up learning totally or partially by heart, and may contribute to their oral fluency (op. cit.).

Short oral presentations can likewise be used to develop foreign language oral skills in young learners (Ur, 2015). In a presentation, the learner usually stands alone in front of the class and relays a message with the support of written cues and visual materials. This activity is important because students may need to use it further on in their academic or professional lives. However, it should be noted that learners must be given time to prepare and rehearse what they are going to say (Harmer, 2015).

Storytelling is another activity that can be employed to improve young learners' speaking skills. According to Nunan (2011), when using a story, the teacher should engage the group whenever possible. For instance, every now and then the story can be stopped, and learners can be asked questions such as "What happens next?" They should, nevertheless,

be familiar with the target language question forms and their respective full sentence answer models so they know which structure to use in their replies. Furthermore, they should also be acquainted with the vocabulary that may be required to produce the answers. Stories are likewise a rich source of aural target language (Ur, 1996), sometimes including sentence pattern repetition that can facilitate language learning (Nunan, 2011). In fact, stories often include rhythms or chants which the teacher can invite learners to say along with her/him (Mourão, 2013), so to practice longer passages of speech.

Songs are also valuable for working on oral production, as they allow young learners to listen to and repeat the target language sounds, rhythm, intonation (Trowbridge, 2000), stress patterns (Phillips, 1993), structures and vocabulary (Nunan, 2011).

Lastly, video clips may improve learners' speaking skills as well (Muslem et al., 2017), since they can be used to present models, reinforce language or start a discussion (Gallacher, 2003). In addition, learners can see the speakers, where they are and what they are doing, which supports understanding. Videos also allow the viewer to notice paralinguistic features such as body language, "facial expressions, gestures, tempo, pauses, voice quality changes, and variations in pitch" (Thornbury, 2007, as cited in Muslem et al., 2017, p. 27). Although young learners take pleasure in learning about language through videos, for them to be appropriate, the clips should be short, their images should contribute to clarify what speakers say, the language speed and level should be within students' reach, and the videos should come with pre-viewing, while viewing and post-viewing tasks.

Taking action

After consulting the literature, I planned a didactic unit specifically designed to help the target group enhance their English language oral production and I put it into action.

The didactic unit was "Let's visit the animals". Throughout ten 45-minute lessons, students were introduced to vocabulary related to zoo and farm animals, prepositions of place, and the use of adjectives. The unit was planned taking into account the adopted textbook, *Smiles 4.º ano Pupil's Book* (Dooley & Evans, 2016c), and aimed at reaching various goals within each domain of the *Metas Curriculares de Inglês Ensino Básico: 1.º, 2.º e 3.º Ciclos* (Bravo et al., 2015). Table 2 presents a summary of those goals.

Table 2. Learning domains and goals explored in the didactic unit

Learning domains	Learning goals (translated from <i>Metas Curriculares de Inglês Ensino Básico: 1.º, 2.º e 3.º Ciclos</i> – Bravo et al., 2015)
Listening	To identify words and phrases in rhymes and songs To understand instructions given specifically for the performance of small tasks To understand sentences about the studied themes
Reading	To identify vocabulary accompanied by pictures
Spoken interaction	To ask and answer questions about personal preferences To ask and answer questions about previously presented themes
Spoken production	To say rhymes, chants, and sing songs To speak about the themes worked on in class
Writing	To put words in the correct order to make sentences To write about preferences
Intercultural domain	To participate in games and short role plays To identify animals
Lexis and grammar	To identify vocabulary related to animals/let's visit the animals: Animals and sounds; Animals on the farm; Animals at the zoo To use lexical chunks or sentences that include: Prepositions of place – next to, behind, in front of

The didactic unit also aimed at getting learners to go beyond one-word utterances. Bearing this in mind, I focused on the Communicative Language Teaching approach (Richards & Rodgers, 2001), and carried it out through activities that simulated real life situations, according to my readings.

Guessing games

The class played two guessing games. The first one was “What’s in my bag?” (Ur, 2015). A bag with an animal figurine inside was displayed, and they had to guess the animal by using the model “Is it a [insert animal]?”

The second guessing game was “Guess the animal!”, in which one student had to describe a farm animal orally, by being prompted by a card with an animal picture and a text, while her/his classmate had to try and guess the animal by looking at the animal pictures on the board and using the model: “You’re a [insert animal]!” (Figure 1)¹.



Figure 1. Animal card

Role play

In several instances, learners engaged in role play where one of them took on the role of the teacher and asked the questions, while their classmate would answer. The complete sentence models they had to use were written on the board, and there were also *realia*, such as animal pictures and animal products (Figure 2). The model questions were: “Where’s the [insert animal]?” and “What do [insert animal] give us?” The model answers were: “The [insert animal] is here.” and “They give us [insert animal products].”



Figure 2. *Realia*

Presentations

Learners had the opportunity to perform two presentations. The first presentation was about a zoo they had built (Figure 3)². Each student had to present their zoo to the class, by following a model written on the board.

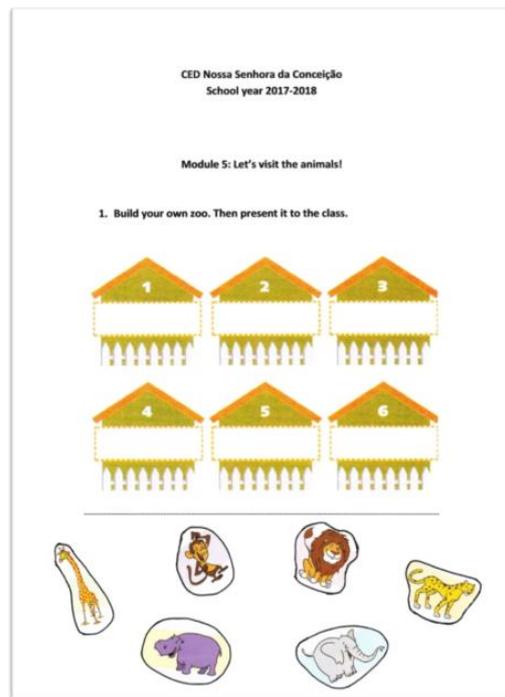


Figure 3. Zoo handout

The second presentation was about their favorite animal. Each child had to draw their favorite animal and present it to the class. They had written the presentation text previously by following a model, and had rehearsed it, but during the presentation they could look at the model on the board for support if needed.

Story

To introduce learners to the zoo/wild animal sounds *roar*, *whoosh*, *howl*, *snap*, *hiss*, and *growl*, the story *Walking Through the Jungle* (Harter & Penner, 2011) was read out loud. Every now and then, the story was stopped, and students were asked to look at the illustrations and answer visual comprehension questions, such as: “What do you see?” and “What are they doing?”, by using the complete sentence models that were provided orally.

Songs

The story *Walking Through the Jungle* (Harter & Penner, 2011) came with a song by the same name that was used for the identification of the zoo/wild animal sounds learned in the story. The singer sang the lines and the class repeated them in choral response.

The other song was “Old MacDonald’s got a farm” (Dooley & Evans, 2016b). The class was introduced to the farm animal sounds *moo*, *meow*, *neigh*, *cluck*, *oink*, and *quack* and everyone sang along to the song.

Videos

Learners were introduced to the language chunk “My favorite animal is the...” via two short videos created specifically for the occasion by two friends of mine (Figures 4 and 5). In the videos, a non-native speaker of English (Andreia Alves) and an Australian English native speaker (Cyndi Fontyn) talked about their favorite animals while holding a drawing and a picture. After viewing the videos, students were asked several oral and visual comprehension questions, and had to produce some of the answers by using the complete sentence models that were provided orally.



Figure 4. Freeze-frame from Andreia’s video “My favorite animal”



Figure 5. Freeze-frame from Cyndi’s video “My favorite animal”

Analyzing the results

During the course of the didactic unit, I used several assessment tools in order to understand the effects the adopted methodology was having on the class: direct observation, observation grids, homework assignments, a formative test, and self-assessment. These tools were essential to keep track of the action research process.

Direct observation

As previously mentioned, the didactic unit included goals from each domain of the *Metas Curriculares de Inglês Ensino Básico: 1.º, 2.º e 3.º Ciclos* (Bravo et al., 2015). Throughout the ten lessons of the unit, I used direct observation to monitor the goals that were achieved. As observed, students were able to fulfill all the goals defined for the unit except for one of the goals of the lexis and grammar domain: to identify vocabulary related to animals and sounds. Learners were unable to recognize the sounds *neigh* and *cluck* as belonging to the horse and the chicken respectively. Nevertheless, the data collected through direct observation seem to suggest that the strategies had a beneficial effect on the students' learning outcomes.

Observation grids

To register each learner's progress regarding oral production, an observation grid was used at three stages of the project: at the beginning of the unit, to assess the learners' initial oral skills in the "Guess the animal!" game played in lessons 1 and 2; in the middle of the unit, to assess their oral production progress in the "Guess the animal!" game played in lessons 5 and 6; and at the end of the unit, to assess their final oral skills in the individual "My favorite animal" presentations performed in lessons 9 and 10. All six observations assessed the same criteria, each one worth 20%:

- *Did the student describe the animal?* (Yes 20%/ No 0%)
- *Was the student intelligible?* (Yes 20%/ Not always 10%/ No 0%)
- *Were there any pauses and hesitations?* (Virtually none 20%/ A little 15%/ Some 10%/ A lot 5%)
- *Did the student build complete sentences?* (Yes 20%/ No 10%)
- *Did the student require support?* (Virtually none 20%/ A little 15%/ Some 10%/ A lot 5%).

The global results of the oral production assessments can be seen in Figure 6.

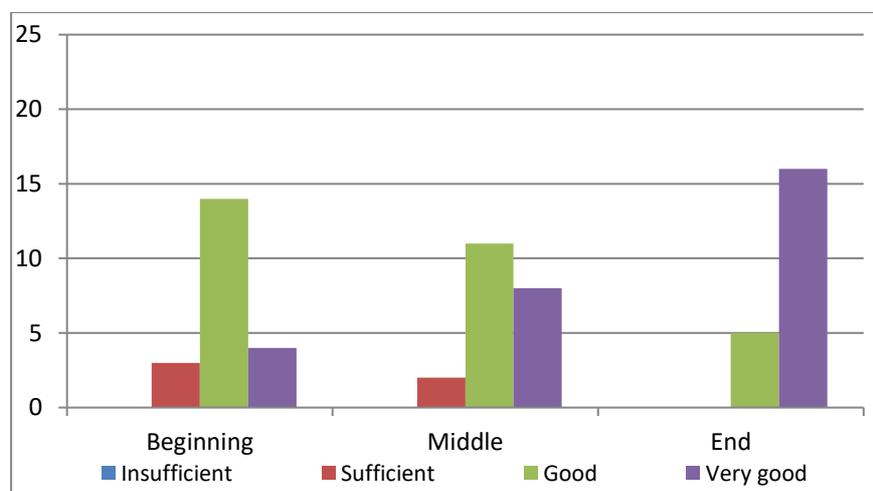


Figure 6. Results of the oral production assessments performed at the beginning, middle and end of the unit

As can be observed, in the assessments performed at the beginning and middle of the unit there were “Sufficients”, but then, as the lessons progressed, the students’ oral production improved. In the oral production assessment performed at the beginning of the unit, learners were able to express themselves by building complete sentences; however, they had difficulties when it came to intelligibility, hesitancy, and being able to speak without requiring support. To help the class improve in those areas, special attention was given to them in the speaking activities that followed. The observations done in the middle and at the end of the unit demonstrated that, over time, learners continued to be able to build complete sentences, but they also became more intelligible, talked with fewer pauses and hesitations, and required less support. The data collected seem to support the idea that the strategies adopted promoted not only the use of complete sentences, but also a clearer and more independent oral production.

To assess the behavior of the group, another observation grid was used in two different moments of the didactic unit: in lesson 3, when learners were asked to build their own zoo, and in lesson 9, when they were asked to write about their favorite animal. Both observations assessed the same criteria and had the following percentages:

- *Responsibility* – “Performs the requested task” (Yes 25%/ No 0%)
- *Autonomy* – “Performs the requested task without constantly being helped” (Yes 25%/ No 0%)

- *Participation* – “Performs the task without disturbing classmates” (Yes 25%/ No 0%)
- *Behavior* – “Complies with classroom routines” (Yes 25%/ No 0%).

It was interesting to note that everyone had 100% in terms of behavior. This happened because when I was going from one desk to another and taking notes in the observation grid, students realized they were being assessed, and focused on performing the task at hand in a responsible, autonomous, quiet, and disciplined way. Thus, the assessment tool itself appeared to have contributed to the group’s very good behavior.

Homework assignments

This assessment tool was used to monitor the students’ learning. Throughout the didactic unit, they were asked to do three homework assignments. The assignment the class had most difficulty with was Homework 2, where they were asked to complete sentences by using prepositions of place. Yet, overall, the data collected through homework assignments seem to suggest that the strategies used had a satisfactory influence on the learning process.

Formative test

This assessment tool was used to provide learners with evidence of their progress. The formative test took place in lesson 8 and was applied through the Plickers web tool. The test was composed of multiple-choice questions, whose majority was answered correctly. The topics students had most difficulty with were the prepositions of place and what farm animals give us. Nevertheless, the data collected through the formative test seem to indicate that the strategies implemented had a favorable influence on the students’ learning.

Self-assessment

In the last lesson of the didactic unit, the class was asked to fill in a self-assessment form, which aimed at helping them reflect on their progress. The form presented the learning goals that had been shown in the first lesson of the unit, and students were asked to identify what they could and could not do. Most learners felt they had achieved all of the learning goals defined; however, it was interesting to notice that contrary to what the

previously mentioned assessment tools had indicated, some felt they were unable to identify animals that live at a zoo or on a farm, or describe animals.

Final grades

The students' final grades were determined by the oral production assessments performed in the middle and at the end of the didactic unit (40%), the three homework assignments (30%) and the two behavior assessments (30%). According to the results, from the 24 students of the class, nine students finished the didactic unit with "Good" and fifteen students "Very good". These results suggest that the project had a positive impact on the students' learning outcomes.

Reflecting and planning for further action

Over the course of ten 45-minute lessons, I taught the didactic unit "Let's visit the animals", while focusing on improving the class's learning outcomes, behavior, and oral production. I maintained the importance the cooperating teacher gave to homework and behavior, but introduced some changes, such as conducting the classes in English only, and adding new types of activities, like guessing games, presentations, and role plays. As demonstrated by the results presented in this paper, these strategies seemed to have had a favorable influence on the learners' performance. Nevertheless, it was sometimes challenging to manage the class, the time, and adjust the instruction when needed.

Despite the aforementioned difficulties, the Supervised Teaching Practice was a very enriching experience where I learned a lot. One of the most meaningful lessons that I took with me was that routines are important for young learners as they allow them to improve their understanding and grow. Furthermore, the activities selected must be developmentally appropriate. In addition, keeping learners meaningfully busy prevents the noise level from rising.

Regarding oral production, I observed that during the speaking activities, learners were able to produce complete sentences when they were provided with the model in writing or had been practicing it in the previous lessons. When the model was provided just orally, they were unable to use it to build complete sentences right away, as they needed to practice the complete sentence model a couple of times before they were able to actually

use it. Additionally, without a written model, they sometimes went back to producing one-word utterances.

While learners were performing the speaking activities, it was curious to see that having visual aids, *realia*, or pieces of work created by them helped support their understanding and production. In addition, encouraging hesitant or shy learners helped them find the confidence to talk. Finally, allowing students to express their personal views or feelings also motivated them to speak.

As lessons progressed, the class's oral production improved. In fact, as discussed in the previous section, when prompted and supported, learners began producing full sentences in a clearer and more independent way. Consequently, it seemed that although speaking presents a challenge to young learners, when activities are motivating and models are provided to support understanding and production, they are able to go beyond one-word utterances and build complete sentences.

This conclusion, however, is based on the results obtained from activities that were, overall, very controlled, guided and reproductive in nature. If there had been more time, I would have introduced students to peer interaction activities without an adult being present, and generated more opportunities for creative speaking, so I could understand the effects of these strategies on the learners' ability to produce longer utterances. Moreover, it would have been interesting to visit this class at the beginning of the following school year to see whether learners had gone back to producing one-word answers or if they were still using full sentences orally.

With no previous experience in teaching or research, the Supervised Teaching Practice was the very first time I assumed the role of the teacher-researcher with a real class. By researching my own practice, I was able to make sense of what was happening in the classroom, evaluate what had gone wrong and what had gone right, and understand the effects of my actions. Nevertheless, I found it challenging to adjust my teaching strategies whenever the students' learning or my performance proved not to be completely successful.

I believe that researching my own practice has contributed to improve the students' learning outcomes and my professional development. The systematic data analysis and critical self-reflection allowed me to identify the curricular goals that had not been entirely met, realize what kind of teacher I was becoming, and pinpoint the skills I could

improve on as a teacher. Furthermore, owing to this experience and the different seminars of the Master's, I became equipped with a method based on observation, enquiry and reflective practice that I now use daily to enhance my students' learning and my teaching practice.

Notes

1. Image retrieved from: <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/pig/#pig-fence.jpg> (accessed on the 2nd of April 2018).
2. Images retrieved from: Dooley & Evans (2016a, 2016c).

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