

TASK 8. Peer evaluation

After having had the experience of planning and implementing a co-teaching activity with one of my colleagues, I realise how beneficial it can be for both the teachers involved and the students (who will be presented with different ways of doing an activity, giving an explanation, etc.).

I value the experience as being very positive because I had the chance to visit another school, I could learn about how they worked, I could meet other children who were younger than what I was used to (I had never done any of my internships in 3rd grade) and I could learn from my co-teacher.

I consider it was more useful, or that I could learn more, when I was in the school I had never been before. Everything was new for me and it was a great opportunity to learn other ways of teaching and learning.

Teaching with one of my colleagues enabled us to identify some strengths of her which I think that are essential for a teacher to have.

First of all, I consider that my co-teacher is a very flexible person and can easily improvise and make changes in the lesson when something goes unexpectedly. For example, at first, in our co-teaching lesson, we decided to play a game with her students and when we had been playing for a while, some kids starting playing with each other, raising their tone of voice, etc., so she decided to add another game in the lesson which was not planned but that she knew that students knew how to play and they were more calmed when playing it (since it had happened in some of her previous lessons).

Another of the strengths of my colleague is the help she provides to students with regards their abilities. That is, when teaching, she takes into account the Zone of Proximal Development (developed by Lev Vygotsky) of her students and tries to make them improve drawing from that premise. In the co-teaching lesson that we did in her school, for example, she was the one choosing the words that we wanted the students to remember about, she was the one asking some of the vocabulary that she knew that they already had been gone through and some vocabulary which was new for some of them but that some students were already able to understand.

Another aspect which I was able to identify and which I think it is one of her strengths as a teacher is that she is so active and dynamic in the classroom. I could easily see that she has been doing her Practicum V with students of infant education and 3rd graders (no older) and that she makes more gestures and uses body language much more than I do, for example. I realised that I am so used to the level of English of the 5th graders I have been teaching, that I sometimes do not think about making some gestures to exemplify what I am saying because I know that my students understand me. However, when I was in my co-teacher school, I realised that I had to change my mind and help those students understand my explanations.

So, one of the abilities as a teacher which I admire the most of my co-teacher is the level of communication that she achieves thanks to her body language. When I try to do so, I feel that I am exaggerating it so much. However, I realise that exaggerating what I am saying (even if I think that it is not so necessary) makes a huge difference and really helps the students follow the lesson.

Furthermore, my co-teacher is always looking for innovative ways of presenting information in the classroom or adding technology, for instance. According to Danieli (2017), new technologies have to be included in the classroom undoubtedly for the interest and motivation it provokes to students; in the co-teaching lesson we did in my school, she had the idea of looking for an online drum roll to put the sound before announcing the winner of each of the awards we were delivering students. They had so much fun because it added a touch of suspense and alert which made it more exciting.

Moreover, a teacher also has to be friendly and warm with students. While playing the games, both of us were making some comments to encourage the teams that were playing, making jokes to make them have fun, etc. I consider that both the students and us had a good time during the co-teaching lesson.

All in all, I consider my colleague to have done an amazing job in both co-teaching lessons since she adapted so quickly to the level of my students and did the appropriate changes in her lessons taking into account the behavior or mood of her students. She was really helpful in the lesson we carried out in my school and we divided the roles in a quite balanced way; so, I would change nothing about her role and her performance in the classroom.