

Monthly Workshops: The Importance of Practice in the Professional Development of Students

Las Mañanas de Trabajo: La Importancia de la Práctica en el Desarrollo Profesional de los Estudiantes.

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Abstract

This article aims to explain the importance of practical experience in the professional development of students of the Higher Technician of the English Language program, from the Universidad Tecnológica Cadereyta, in Nuevo Leon, through a monthly activity called "Mañanas de trabajo". As a result, this activity has favored the strengthening and integration of the skills and competencies promoted by the study plan, in the professional training of the students of the career, especially in the teaching of the English language; furthermore, "Mañanas de trabajo" has allowed the interaction of university students with schoolchildren of the different levels of basic education, through various activities that are carried out throughout this monthly exercise in the classrooms and various spaces on the university campus. Therefore, the importance of meaningful learning is considered, through the different practices that are generated, above all, the impact on the integral formation of students in the educational area.

Key words: Teaching, Meaningful Learning, Practices

Resumen

El presente artículo tiene como objetivo explicar la importancia de las prácticas en el desarrollo profesional de los estudiantes del Técnico Superior Universitario de la carrera de Lengua Inglesa, de la Universidad Tecnológica Cadereyta, en Nuevo León, a través de una actividad mensual denominada "Mañanas de Trabajo". Dicha actividad ha favorecido el fortalecimiento e integración de las habilidades y competencias que promueve el plan de estudios, en la formación profesional del estudiantado de la carrera, especialmente en la enseñanza del idioma Inglés; ha permitido, la interacción de los estudiantes universitarios con alumnos de los diferentes niveles de educación básica, por medio de diversas actividades que se realizan a lo largo de la mañana en las aulas y diversos espacios del campus de la universidad. Se considera la importancia del aprendizaje significativo, a través de las diversas prácticas que se generan, además, el impacto en la formación integral de los estudiantes del área educativa.

Enseñanza, Aprendizaje Significativo, Prácticas

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Introduction

The field of education is constantly evolving, and with it, the practices that are used to help students learn and develop. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on the importance of practices that promote student engagement, collaboration and critical thinking. The implementation of practical spaces in the university that provide them with competences and reinforce skills is indispensable for their holistic education.

The following paper describes the impact that the exercise called "Mañanas de Trabajo" has on the students of the TSU in English Language at the Universidad Tecnológica Cadereyta, in their training and professional development. Examples of the types of internships and the skills and competences they develop in university students are also discussed.

Internships and Meaningful Learning in University Students

There is sufficient literature to suggest that internships are essential for students' development. For Alicia Almeida Cantoní (2007) "teaching should promote the construction of meaningful spaces, where there is room for reflection in action and the use of metacognitive strategies through which the student can execute an adequate process of planning, self-regulation and evaluation of the results obtained during learning" (Almeida, 2007). (Almeida, 2007) Students who participate in collaborative learning activities are more likely to retain information and develop higher level thinking skills.

Anyela Manrique and Adriana Gallego (2013) quote Ausubel and tell us that "the essence of the meaningful process is that ideas expressed symbolically are related not arbitrarily, but substantially (not verbatim) to what the learner already knows, pointing to some essential aspect of his or her knowledge structure". (Manrique & Gallego, 2013) Practices can be used to promote students' development and have the potential to help them learn and develop in meaningful ways.

There are a number of specific practices that can be used to promote the development of students. Some of these practices include:

Project-based learning: this type of learning involves students working on real-world problems that require them to use critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration skills.

Inquiry-based learning: this type of learning involves students asking questions, conducting research and drawing conclusions.

Role-play: this type of learning involves students taking on different roles and simulating real-world situations.

Service learning: this type of learning involves students giving back to their community while learning about important social issues.

Experiential learning: this type of learning involves students having hands-on experiences that help them learn new skills and concepts.

Practices also have the benefit of promoting participation, collaboration and critical thinking; using practices that are aligned with the latest research on learning and development has other benefits. These practices can help to:

- Develop the Teaching-Learning process
- Organise and adapt the learning environment
- Enable active pedagogy
- Increase student motivation
- Improve student performance
- prepare students for university and the workforce
- Identify students' exit profile to enable them to make choices and set goals for career development
- Helping students develop social-emotional skills
- Promote a positive school climate

For Faraón Llorens (2013) "people learn, influenced by the environment and the situation they are facing, through a continuous sequence in which past experiences affect (positively or negatively) future learning" (Llorens, 2013). (Llorens, 2013) The constant interaction of students with the social environment to which their own training is directed, reinforces and positions central and fundamental learning to develop them in professional life.

Specific practices that promote student development

The Monthly Workshops have been a permanent exercise at the Cadereyta Technological University since 2015. This particular practice is carried out on the days when the Ministry of Public Education has scheduled the Technical Council Meetings at national level, currently the last Friday of each month. On that day, Basic Education students from Pre-school, Primary and Secondary levels come to the university to reinforce the English language through various didactic-pedagogical activities.

Students from the TSU English Language Education Programme participate in the Work Mornings from the first term onwards. However, their approach is gradual and in accordance with the knowledge they acquire in the subjects of the degree course.

Stages of the Morning Work

Planning. Students work in teams and individually, guided by the teachers, to construct didactic situations that generate significant learning for those attending the working morning.

They include strategies, techniques and teaching methods seen in the current term.

The English classes to be taught are divided as follows: song, story, role play and craft.

Decoration. Develops innovative, functional and sustainable teaching material based on its characteristics and using creative techniques and tools.

With this material, they modify the common spaces and assigned classrooms, according to the theme of the month, in order to contribute to the teaching-learning process.

Welcome. Reception of those attending the morning's work. In teams implement an ice-breaker activity (song, performance, warm-up), performance, warm-up). Identify the grade to which each student belongs.

Activation. They carry out exercises and other activities that involve body movement, as part of the moments of play according to the stage of human development of the participants by educational level.

Teaching of classes. They develop the didactic sequences that were planned, in a time of 50 minutes in front of the group, using 50 minutes in front of the group, using the didactic material selected and/or designed by them.

Feedback. In addition to the constant feedback they receive from the teachers, a session is held to share learning, where they receive recognition and areas of opportunity are identified by the observing teachers and the students themselves.

Educational Profile

During the course of the educational programme, students acquire the following competences:

1. To develop the teaching-learning process, considering planning, didactic instrumentation and evaluation, in order to fulfil the pedagogical and institutional objectives.
2. To teach the English language through mastery of level B1 of the European reference framework, and teaching techniques specific to the language in order to develop the four linguistic skills in students at the basic education level.

These competences enable them to transfer knowledge, attitudes and skills to professional areas.

General Description of Activities and Quarterly Distribution

The following is a general description of the activities carried out during the Mornings Work Placement (Table 1) and the four-monthly distribution of the subjects studied by the TSU in English Language (Table 2):

First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter	Fourth Quarter
They observe the practice of their third-semester classmates	They prepare the welcome and activation stages.	They plan and select teaching strategies and techniques.	They develop teaching learning activities for preschool, elementary and high school, focused on the acquisition of English language skills.	They diagnose the academic variables using diagnostic assessment techniques, and considering their individual and group characteristics, to determine the level of English language proficiency and select approaches, methods, strategies and techniques for language teaching and learning.
They collaborate to carry out the welcome.	They make didactic material to work and decorate the welcome and activation spaces.	Design didactic material according to the needs of the educational level and its planning. Planning needs.	They design and adapt didactic material according to their didactic sequences.	Plan and implement language teaching techniques and methods to develop the four language skills in elementary school students. linguistic skills in students at the basic education level.
	They support students in their fourth in their classes in front of the group.	Implement the Didactic sequences designed by themselves for the three levels of basic education.	Implement the didactic sequences designed by themselves for the three levels of basic education	Design and adapt didactic material according to their didactic to their didactic sequences.
	Develop learning situations for preschool level.	They establish the types of evaluation according to the moment.	Generate evaluation instruments for their didactic sequences.	Generate evaluation instruments for their didactic sequences.

Table 1 Description General de Activities Universidad Tecnológica Cadereyta, 2023

Quarter / Areas of knowledge	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Applied basic sciences	Mathematics	Statistics applied to education			
	Informatics	Education In Mexico	Investigation methodology		
Technology background	Pedagogical Foundations Of Education	Design of Didactic Material I	Design of Didactic Material Ii	English Language Teaching Strategies I	English Language Teaching Strategies Ii
	Human Development	Didactics Methodology I	Didactics Methodology Ii	Design of Learning Situations	Grammatical Structure
			Education Planning	Evaluation Tools	Teaching Productive Skills
			Evaluation Of The Teaching And Learning Process	Phonetics	Teaching Receptive Skills
Languages and methods	English I	English II	English III	English IV	English V
	Oral and written expression i				Oral and written expression ii
Management skills	Sociocultural training i	Sociocultural training ii	Sociocultural training iii	Sociocultural training iv	

Table 2 Four-monthly distribution of the subjects of the TSU in English Language, Universidad Tecnológica Cadereyta, 2019



Figure 1 Physical Activation. Working Morning, May 2023



Figure 2 Desarrollo de Secuencia Didáctica (Preescolar), Mañana de Trabajo, mayo 2023

Methodology to be developed

A qualitative and quantitative methodology was developed, as well as desk research to develop the theoretical basis.

Results

During the year 2022, there was an enrolment of 87 students in the Higher Technical University Programme in English Language, who attended 293 children from basic level schools during the Work Mornings sessions.

The following graph shows the permanence of the enrolment of TSU students in English Language; the increase in the enrolment of new students in the September-December 2022 term and the ratio of students attending per term. During the year 2022, there was an enrolment of 87 students in the Higher Technical University Programme in English Language, who attended 293 children from basic level schools during the Work Mornings sessions.

The following graph shows the permanence of the enrolment of TSU students in English Language; the increase in the enrolment of new students in the September-December 2022 term and the ratio of students attending per term.



Graph 1 Student enrolment. Working Morning 2022

Conclusions

The practices used in education have a significant impact on the development of students. Practices that promote participation, collaboration and critical thinking are essential, and as a result, the university students have also developed a close communication and relationship with the community, as each exercise manages to increasingly engage the basic education population of the municipality of Cadereyta Jiménez, N.L.

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