ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE 

 Living in Spain presented me with many different opportunities to expand my horizons and try new things as expected with any trip abroad. One of my most profound and engaging opportunities was having the chance to teach English to a class of about 25 6th graders. The experience was extremely gratifying and I enjoyed every second that I spent in the class helping the kids. At first it was surly prevalent that few of the kids knew but a few a words if not none at all.

            After several lessons getting to know one another and presenting power points about myself to my class of sixth graders I decided to approach class activities differently. The power points were a great meet and greet but I was time to really engage the children and have them actually take something out of the class besides the pictures on the slides. I wanted them to think for themselves when it came to trying to understand English as a foreign language. I have never been a fan of memorizing vocab in any of my language classes, though it is a very important part of the learning another language, and I could tell these hyper young students would need more stimulation to get them to practice and learn.

            A typical class held after we were able to get through all of the slides about me would involve an introduction such as I did in the Music lesson talking for about ten minutes about what we were going to do in the class today. The intro described what the kids would participate in, in this case the kids would be part of a concert. This was no ordinary concert because they, the audience, would have to sing along and to do so learn the lyrics of the song. Once the song was demonstrated once it was then to the practicing. The students would be taught one simple verse at a time and had to understand the meaning of each stanza. Usually the stanza would be relatively simple concepts to understand. After ten minutes of practice with eachother we would be ready to play all together and it was you to them to stay in the same rhythm. This has probably easily taken up to thirty minutes in the class. At this point to review you can ask students in a conversation activity questions related to the lyrics getting them to talk. After ten minutes of conversation we could move on to learning the next part of the song, practice it, and then talk about for the remaining minutes of the class, the way how the two parts are connected and or drawing conclusions on what they think it is saying or interpretations to the meaning.

            The purpose and practical use to this lesson plan was specifically targeted for the age group I was teaching. Little knowledge of the language meant that we had to really capture their attention. These activities really appeal to the class because they feel like they are doing something more than just trying to play with these words from a funny language. Without realizing it these kids were speaking, reading, and having conversations in English. It is easy for them because it is fun.

            Because these activities were fun and on topic with what the children actually had interesting in learning, i.e foreign music, It was easy to convince them that they wanted to learn the word and what they meant. The practical use of the sentences learned was endless. Management of altering attention spans in these particular lessons was well covered. It was easy to have them work through ten minutes of learning language if there was a reward at the end such as singing along and playing music which in turn provided the other part of the lesson of actually practicing speaking. Such ideas that stemmed from the conversation and learning of the song such as possibly the Beatles song ‘Hey Jude’. The class would need to actively memorize and put the sentences in order to stay in rhythm of the song. The music acted as a crutch letting the kids feel out which word would be next according to the song. The wrong word would just simply not fit, but if forgotten other students could quickly remind them of how the song goes. Most songs have a back ground story following the lyrics. Fortunately most songs use relatively simple words that don’t have many syllables. The short and concise words and meanings to the songs provides an easy was to understand and place conjecture.

My evaluation of this lesson plan is that the class really took to it and was very captured and actually enjoyed learning the material. The class involvement in the singing and learning of the songs really changed the game and they were no longer nervous to speak out because everyone was speaking and ready use the words. The enthusiasm to continue learning was there because of the actual enjoyment of the activities themselves. The lesson involved multiple types of learning so they did not get to restless of just listening or too frustrated of just speaking. Each in short increments proved to capture the attention very well and in a rowdy class of eleven and twelve year olds attention can be hard to obtain.

            Time was no issue when it came to carrying out this lesson plan. Music provided endless resources, when it came to looking for material we would simply learn more of the song. The more of the song that was learned too the more the students saw the bigger picture of the story as and also more of a ‘reward’ aka practicing what they learned because we could play music for even longer than before. These activities proved to be more attention capturing and successful among my class room. It was not only the music but the type of hands on experience each student had.

            In conclusion the class really loved the time we were able to spend playing music. They were less aware of the fact that they were learning English but maybe more enthused with learning English music. This stimulating, hands-on, lesson plan really captures you attention of the kids and gets them to step out of their comfort zone a little bit. Music makes the class more interesting and a common synergy is reached when trying to learn how to do something you truly enjoy. With these methods I definitely saw improvements in their motivation and cooperation during class time. I would recommend the use of this lesson in any English as a foreign language class. The results will astound you. Music is something that speaks more than words and something that connects all humans together. Meanings and messages conveyed can be perceived very quickly while learning. Overall it was an enjoyable and satisfying experience not only for