

## TEACHING & LEARNING JOURNAL - EDITION 9

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It is well known that teaching is highly influenced by many factors, both inside and outside the classroom. However, one cannot forget that at the same time it also influences the context. Vygotsky states that the intellectual children development cannot be understood as an independent process that happens outside his social context. Therefore not only factors inside and outside the classroom but also the context play an important role on the teaching experience.

During this academic year at Westbourne I first-hand experienced the importance of context within the learning and teaching process.

After six years working as a Primary and Secondary teacher in two different Spain based schools and having acquired enough strategies to manage a classroom that made me feel comfortable and grounded when teaching in a classroom, I felt I was back at first year of University. New brand experiences and strategies that apparently, were all unsuccessful in spite of having been trained by both, the British Council and the Ministry of Education of Spain. After a reflecting period, I found out that the focus was nothing else but context. Why did I not know who pastoral leaders were and why were they in a school? Why did I not know that students cannot retake a year? Why did I not know that student's did not have their own books and I was responsible for their material?

Luckily, answers were found and they brought new strategies and approaches that contributed me to settled down. One of the most relevant differences between the Spanish and the British education system is the behaviour policy and the roles attached to it. Whereas in Spain the pastoral leader role and department does not exist and the main target is having all students together and finding your own ways to teach while coping with disruptive students, in England it is as simple as giving warnings and if that does not work, calling for help. However, assuming the first context while teaching in the second, just can make things much worse.

Another point of interest is student's progression. While in Spain one must pass at least seven out of nine subjects each year in order to move to the next one, otherwise the student has to retake the year, in England everyone moves to the next year regardless of their grades. The pressure that a teacher can put on students that neither their parents nor them want to spend an extra year in a school, makes behaviour management and student's interest and motivation easier.

Even though these are just the most remarkable examples according to my experience, there are much more. If teaching in a different school within the same area can be a new world, changing country and culture can be just a new universe. If someone thinks that there might be a point where teaching can be monotonous and routinely leave your comfort zone and explore but don't forgot to think of context first.

