

Jose, Spanish Foreign Language Assistant, Dundee

Hola, mi nombre es Jose y este año academico que esta a punto de terminar he tenido la suerte de trabajar como asistente de idiomas en Dundee.

El objetivo de este ensayo es que tengais una idea general de lo que es trabajar como asistente en Escocia.

Desde el punto de vista personal todo ha sido inmejorable. Fui muy afortunado de poder unirme a una casa donde ya vivian cinco asistentes y ahora somos dos alemanas, dos francesas y dos españoles que nos apoyamos mutuamente. A parte de esto, he podido enrolarme en actividades que siempre me han gustado y he practicado en España, como entrenar baloncesto a niños o jugar para un equipo.

En el plano profesional, todo ha sido tambien bastante bonito. He podido trabajar con una gran variedad de alumnos que me va a reportar una experiencia inolvidable. La edad de mis alumnos ha comprendido desde los diez hasta los cincuenta años aproximadamente.

Empezando por los mas pequeñitos, he de decir que la primaria era algo que me asustaba desde el principio al no haber trabajado nunca con estas edades. No tuvo que terminar la primera clase para que me diera cuenta de que estaba equivocado. Los alumnos de P6 y P7 de Ss Peter & Paul y Our Lady's Primary schools han sido sin duda los que mas trabajo me han dado, pero ellos han respondido siempre de manera sobresaliente. Bajo mi punto de vista, con los alumnos de primaria, el principal objetivo al plantearte las clases es tratar de que tus alumnos aprendan sin que ellos se den cuenta de toda la informacion nueva que estan recibiendo. Cuando juegas con ellos a algo que realmente les gusta, no supone ningun esfuerzo tenerlos activos, y la mayoría de las veces hasta ellos mismos se sorprenden al final de la clase cuando comprueban todas las cosas nuevas que se han visto en la leccion del dia.

En secundaria es un poco mas complicado motivar a tus alumnos por la edad tan complicada en la que se encuentran, pero otra vez los alumnos de St John High School han sido unos alumnos que han facilitado mucho mi tarea. Normalmente mi papel con estos alumnos de S4, S5 and S6 se ha centrado en el plano oral, no he tenido que explicarles muchas cosas sino mas bien dialogar con ellos, crear debates o simplemente hablarles sobre temas de actualidad en España o en el Reino Unido como el racismo, la familia, la sociedad etc. Mi labor ha sido mas bien reforzar los contenidos que ellos habian previamente estudiado con sus profesores.

Por ultimo hablare un poco de mi labor como asistente en el MLPS. Este es un curso para profesores de primaria con el fin de que ellos en un futuro puedan enseñar español en sus respectivos colegios.

Tambien a estas edades hay que saber como motivar a tus alumnos, en este caso profesores, y es algo que el profesor titular a conseguido con bastante exito. Mi labor aqui no ha sido solo la de enseñar, sino tambien la de aprender de toda la experiencia de estas nueve profesoras que teniamos en el curso.

No me gustaria terminar este ensayo sin hacer una pequeña comparacion entre la enseñanza de idiomas aqui y en mi pais. Yo he tenido la suerte de trabajar como profesor titular en un instituto de secundaria en España, y realmente, no habia cosa que mas me desanimara o defraudara que el ver a un alumno de ultimo curso, despues de haber estudiado ingles durante al menos ocho años, tres horas a la semana, y ser incapaz de mantener una conversacion de mas de un minuto. Creo que el sistema britanico, con la labor de los asistentes, y su metodologia mas practica, recoge muchos mas frutos que el español.

Hello, my name is Jose, and fortunately during this academic year that is about to finish I have worked as a foreign language assistant in Dundee.

The aim of this review is that all of you have a general idea about what kind of job is a language assistant teacher in Scotland.

From the personal point of view, everything has been great. I was very lucky when I was able to move into a house with five more assistants. Now, we are two German, two Spanish and two French, and obviously, we support each other. I was also able to enrol in some activities that I always liked and practiced in Spain, like coaching basketball and even playing for a local team.

Professionally talking, all has been wonderful as well. I have been able to work with a great variety of pupils and students that is going to bring me an unforgettable experience. The age of my students ranges from ten to fifty years old approximately.

Beginning with the wee ones, I have to say that primary was something that terrified me since I had never worked with this age. However, I need not have worried - the first class made me realize that I was wrong. P6 and P7 pupils from Ss Peter & Paul and Our Lady's primary schools have undoubtedly been the ones who kept me busier, but they have answered me back in an outstanding way. From my point of view, with primary pupils, the main aim when you plan your classes is to ensure that your pupils learn without them realizing the quantity of new information they are receiving. When you play with them something that they really like, it is not difficult to keep them active, and most of the times even they are surprised at the end of the class when they think about all the new things they have seen that day.

In secondary it is a bit harder to motivate your pupils due to the difficult age where they are, but again, pupils from St John's High School have made my job much easier. Normally, my task with these pupils from S4, S5 and S6 has been focused on the oral side of the language. I have not had to explain them many things, we normally have dialogues, some debates or I just talk about current topics in Spain and the United Kingdom such as racism, the family, or society... My task has been more to reinforce the contents that they had previously studied with their teachers.

Finally, I am going to talk about my task in the MLPS course. This is a course for primary teachers who, in future, are going to teach Spanish in their schools.

Also at this age you must know how to motivate your students (teachers in this case), and this is something that the official teacher has achieved with a great success. My job here has been not only to teach, but also to learn from the experience of these nine teachers we have had in the course.

I would like to finish this review by making a wee comparison between the teaching of languages here in Britain and in my country. I have already worked in Spain as an official teacher in a High School and the thing that disappointed me the most was to see one pupil in his last year in his secondary education, having studied at least eight years of English, three hours a week, and being incapable of keeping a conversation longer than a minute. I think the British system, with the job of the assistants and its more practical methodology is proving much more profitable than the Spanish one.