

Bachelor Thesis Review

Name: Barbora Krizova

Title: Openings and Closures of English Lessons

Miss Krizova has written her bachelor work on openings and closure o English Lessons. As she states on p. 1 it will be a comparison between “educational theory an school practices.” This opening sentence is rather general and is the “subject” of all bachelor works. As she states she will focus on the beginnings and endings of lessons. In practice she is talking about 10 minutes of the lesson. Personally, this reminds me of a sports commentator commenting on the kick-off and the final five minutes of play. This may not be an appropriate question but what about the rest of the lesson? During her thesis Miss. Krizova makes virtually no mention of the content of the lesson beyond these beginning and concluding five minutes consisting of greeting and sometimes checking homework. As a reader I immediately have to ask myself, what will be the pedagogic implications of this thesis since the checking homework and greeting have virtually nothing to do with the main content of the lesson. What have future teachers to learn from Miss Krzova’s bachelor thesis by only focusing on the first and last five minutes of the lesson?

In the practical part of the thesis she will :”research” the beginnings and ends of the lessons. As she states on p. 1 she will use as a primary source of data the observation sheets filled out by her colleagues. My next question is if the bachelor thesis was written by Miss Krizova, since we are not talking about surveys filled out and tabulated and a conclusion is made based upon it, shouldn’t Miss Krizova, since the work is her own and written by her have conducted the observations herself? How can we rely on her colleagues has valid data when their names are not attached to the bachelor work? I would immediately question the academic validity of such a method where she is relying on the observations of others and taking them as her own with no personal data to back those observations up.

In the theoretical part beginning on p. 3 she discusses Lesson Planning, how the lesson should be planned and prepared. She discusses the structure of the lesson, process and creating the lesson plan. I think for this purpose a visual model of a lesson plan would have been appropriate with the labeled parts which would be helpful to teacher trainees as she writes. This section is rather general and serves a the purpose give the base of the information to follow. After citing Schrivner on p. 4 she writes: “The lesson plan serves as an evidence that the teacher thought about the lesson from many perspectives.” She could have elaborated on this point as to how someone would go about doing this or how the lesson plan demonstrates this. As it reads, it is true but more discussion would have been appropriate. She does include some opinions from scholars and I think more discussion as to the meaning behind the comments could be further discussed. They are appropriately inserted but they give the impression of simply filling an academic requirement rather than lending to the global purpose of the thesis as a

Scrivener then advises the inexperienced teachers saying..”p.4 “helps to a very good lesson” “planning is an ability” “usable guide to the teaching” p.5 the theory should turn into practice.”There are other mistakes throughout the thesis but to make a list would be redundant since they can be found by the reader. These errors in basic use of the language show that more care should have gone into its final preparation in order to offer the best impression possible. She then continues to explain the criteria in planning lessons. On p. 7 she writes “If the teacher has a lesson with advanced students no games or songs will be included.” Is this a generalization or advice for all teachers teaching advanced students. Is it true that advanced students do not need or wish for games or songs in the lesson? I think this is an indication of a generalization which should have been given more thought or at least been supported by other academics. “Depending on the methods the teacher use, this paragraph is to be focused on them.” What are the academic implications of this statement about the paragraph?

On p. 9 she goes to the :”heart” of the bachelor thesis which are the openings and closings of lessons. The opening sentence on p. 9 reads “Although openings and closures are ignored they are crucial for the success and failure of the lesson” Is this so? I looked for academic evidence to support this comment but I was unable to find it. Again on p. 9 “The opening is considered to be one of the most important parts of the lessons.” This may be so in the opinion of Miss. Krizova but as stated earlier I have not found academic evidence to support it.

She then continues to describe such factors which appear to have little to do with the effectiveness of the lesson such as “arriving on time” “the door can be opened” “distributes papers” “arrive to class with everything that is needed” “check if everything is prepared” “seating order” “safe environment” :clapping the hands or tapping the pen” “clean the board” “open the windows” “chang seating order.” I wonder how do these pieces of advice make excellent teachers?

At the risk of sounding biased I feel there are other factors which could be discussed in greater detail such as review of material, fillers, testing, giving a short quiz, introducing the material to follow etc..which could occupy greater importance in the 45-minute lesson. She could have suggested effective warm-ups but as it stands beyond these unsubstantiated generalizations, there is nothing beyond a superficial level with little academic evidence to support these points. She could explain in detail these “boundaries” and ”aims” more specifically in more detail offering clear examples of effective learning. Ending the lesson follows a similar superficial format with such advice as “close your books, please” :”talking to individuals as the bell rings helps to improve the relationships.” In common practice when the bell rings the students get up to leave so these “announcements”(p.12) may better be suited at the beginning of the lesson with a quick reminder at the end. What does “tidying the room for the next teacher”(p.12) have to do with effective learning? Miss. Krizova does discuss superficially other more relevant points which could have been taken as actual advice but they are clouded by the points mentioned.

As She states in the practical part(p.15) she will use the observation sheets as a primary source of data. The validity has already been questioned so it need not be repeated. The observation sheets include information such as the school date, level of students etc. This may be useful for administrative purposes but what academic relevance towards the content does it serve? She could have described the implications early on in the practical section. As she states :” none of them focused precisely on openings and closures of lessons.” Given that fact, what academic relevance as data towards the purpose of the thesis do they serve as primary data? I question whether three observation sheets be considered an adequate amount of raw data for these purposes? In the practical section she offers a brief description of the openings and closings of the lessons. There could have been more description especially in the nursery school(p.17) how the students responded to these openings. How did the children :”focus on learning and acquire the language” I would have been interested to read how this was done. In the primary school: She writes as a closing “Stand up please. Goodby children” What are the implications? How does this help teacher trainees? She could have been more specific as to what vocabular was used for the game played on p. 19) and how it helped the students in acquiring the language.. In lower secondary schools (p. 20)the data consists of “Good morning, Ms. Teacher” and then checked homework. What importance does this data serve towards conducting an effective lesson? In short, with these brief descriptions of the opening and closing of the lessons, some of which have little do with acquiring the language for a bachelor thesis supposedly focusing on a pedagogical theme, I can see a lot of superficial content but very little analysis. She states on p. 23-24 “The lesson started with checking homework from the Bridge magazine....The beginning of the lesson was well-prepared, useful and prepared and the students obviously liked it.” How can she verify this? I think beyond a subjective observation more detail is required. Did all the students like it? Some of them? Did she ask them? As she states on p. 26 “ The opening and closure of the lesson is not a mistake of the teacher but rather a mistake of one of my colleagues since the observation sheet was not completely filled in.” This comment gives proof that she should have conducted the observations herself so as to avoid such an incident and additionally such an excuse has no place in a bachelor thesis. On P. 31 Ms Krizova states as a conclusion, “The findings of this thesis confirm that the activities mostly differ according to age and level of learner. However all the activities should be varied and changed to fit the level of the learners.” Beyond being common knowledge, in which a thesis is not required to determine such a fact, I would have to question the academic implications of such a conclusion. Is that really what the whole thesis was about? What does that contribute to the academic world?

Given all that has been described above, the superficial content, brief descriptions and little analysis of any kind no pedagogical implications make the reader wonder “what’s the point?” How will this academic discussion help future teachers? For all of the reasons described above, beginning with how the topic was approached and conducted throughout the bachelor work in addition to the fact that there is no concrete data in the appendix, no breakdown of data or conclusions, no sense of what it all means as a whole and no evidence of actual research besides brief observations, I have no choice but to recommend a (4)“unsatisfactory” as a final mark.

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