



FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN DE PALENCIA
UNIVERSIDAD DE VALLADOLID

**DEVELOPING READING SKILLS IN A YOUNG
SUPPORT GROUP IN A BILINGUAL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

El Desarrollo de la Capacidad Lectora de un grupo de apoyo
en un centro de Educación Primaria Bilingüe

**TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO
MAESTRO EN EDUCACIÓN PRIMARIA – MENCIÓN LENGUA
EXTRANJERA: INGLÉS**

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"El verbo leer, como el verbo amar y el verbo soñar, no soporta el imperativo."

Desconocido



"Once you learn to read, you will be forever free."

Frederick Douglass



"To learn to read is to light a fire; every syllable that is spelled out is a spark."

Victor Hugo, Les Misérables

ABSTRACT

In today's society, reading is an essential skill every person must be competent in. It enables us as social beings to communicate with others, and is, in education a basic tool in the learning process when constructing knowledge. Reading allows us to reflect and interpret information, allowing us to understand the world we live in.

In school, reading is a vehicle as it is necessary in all the areas of the school curriculum. It is therefore crucial, that children who have learning problems, specifically in their reading skills get an early appropriate intervention designed specifically for them.

This present work focuses on a small support group in a bilingual setting and encompasses two main aspects, on one hand, the improvement of the pupils' reading skills, and on the other hand on developing in the pupils a positive self concept through self-made materials by the author.

KEY WORDS

Reading Skills, Cognitive Perspective, Whole- Language Approach, Play-Theory, Multiple Intelligences, Emotional Intelligence, Self-Concept

RESUMEN

En la sociedad actual, la lectura es una destreza, en la que todas las personas deben ser competentes. Nos permite, como seres sociales que somos, comunicarnos con otros y es, en la educación una herramienta fundamental en el proceso de la construcción del aprendizaje. La lectura nos permite reflexionar e interpretar información, ayudándonos a entender el mundo en el que vivimos.

En la escuela, la lectura es un vehículo puesto que es necesario en todas las áreas del currículo escolar. Por lo tanto es imprescindible, que aquellos niños que tienen

problemas de aprendizaje, y específicamente retrasos de la lectura reciban un apoyo apropiado diseñado específicamente para ellos.

El presente trabajo se centra en un pequeño grupo de apoyo en un colegio bilingüe y el trabajo abarca dos aspectos generales, por un lado, en la mejora de la capacidad lectora de los alumnos, y por otro, en el desarrollo en los niños de un auto concepto positivo a través de materiales elaborados por el autor.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Capacidades Lectoras, Perspectiva Cognitiva, “Método Global De Lectura”, La Teoría Del Juego, Inteligencias Múltiples, Inteligencia Emocional, Auto Concepto

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the key knowledges a child must acquire by the end of their primary school years is the ability to read, in fact it is expected for a child to have a level of proficiency in reading. Reading forms the basis for the other areas of learning, and is an essential part of literacy; literacy being defined as “using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals and to develop one’s knowledge and potential. (Kirsch et al., 1993) This role every person must have in our modern society simply cannot be achieved if the person isn’t capable of reading.

It is imperative that the Education System emphasizes this need and is aware of the pupils that need support in this educative area; the earlier the teachers design an intervention and a specialized individual program for the pupils that require this extra support, the sooner these pupils will catch up with the rest of the class and will be at group level. If this support doesn’t come early, pupils have a high chance of dragging their learning delays throughout their academic years resulting in them never achieving their full true potential.

Teaching reading is a matter of helping children learn to “construct meaning” and to “use their prior learning and experience to make sense of texts”. (Goodman, 1986) It is a complex task that involves a lot of time and is a process that takes place in several stages.

Reading consists of two processes, on one hand the pupil recognizes the words on the page, and on the other those recognised words are understood. Reading is therefore the product of decoding and comprehension. When children are learning to read they are to be active learners that integrate new information with the reality they know.

There are various theories that support this research paper on the reading process and how pupils learn how to read and methods of teaching reading. This design follows the *cognitive perspective*, where reading is learner-driven and the learning process is learner-activated and motivation is self directed.

The methodology followed when teaching reading lies within the cognitive perspective, this is the *Whole-Language* method. The teacher’s role was that of a guide and a support

helping students engage in learning and make sense of their experiences. This methodology recognises words as a whole, language is not broken into letters or syllables and the reading is never “decoded” language.

The pupils involved in this project were four children from the first years of primary school that weren't at group level with their English Language acquisition. This caused these pupils to sit in literacy class absentmindedly, not paying attention and not grasping many themes that were being taught. In addition to their low level on English the four pupils had a reading delay. One of the pupils had a diagnosed learning disorder, and although two other children were not diagnosed, they clearly had similar issues.

Their development with this project would happen under the constant supervision and guidance of the young teacher through repetition and experimentation, positive reinforcement and protection from ridicule, using visual and contextual clues, exposure to a level appropriate language environment, being within a natural language environment and feeling safe and in a positive learning context.

With this project, the author of this paper wanted to meet two very clear aspects, on one hand he wanted to help the pupils *improve their reading skills*, and on the other it was imperative for him to *enhance the pupils' self-confidence* and self-esteem, which was rather low when he began working with them due to their learning delays and the emotional impact this had on these young children.

In order to achieve this, the young teacher provided the pupils materials that were encouraging and motivating. This material was self made by the teacher and it presented the pupils with a new way of learning. The design of this project is organised in clear activities that involved, a series of strategies through which, the children would read in different ways.

This material was designed in the form of a game, which the pupils could freely manipulate and read while they interacted with the game. The activities were designed to be attractive and appealing to the pupils and were organised to cover as many as Howard Gardner's *multiple intelligences'* ways of learning as possible. The pupil's emotional wellbeing has great importance in this project and Daniel Goleman's theory of *emotional intelligence* and its five domains were key to the pupil's reading learning process.

2. OBJECTIVES

As the student is in his final academic year of studies of “Primary Education in the special field of the Foreign Languages English” degree, this research paper attempts to encompass all the competences he has acquired throughout his studies as a primary teacher and specifically as a language specialist.

With this research paper the author presents the following targets he attempts to achieve.

General targets:

- To analyse the importance reading has in the curriculum and in the life of every person member of our society.
- To understand what the act of reading is and what the processes that comprise reading are.
- To challenge himself by taking upon him the task of teaching how to read.
- To document and research different theories about the didactics of reading in a school context.
- To implement this documentation into the design of this research.

Specific targets:

- To understand how children learn to read.
- To use different techniques and methods to teach reading.
- To find alternative ways that are attractive and appealing to the children.
- To “wake” the children up and engage them in their reading learning process.
- To see beyond the pupils’ limitations and help them achieve their full potential.
- To induce in the pupils a sense of self worth and self confidence.
- To have the children learn in a safe and joyful environment that motivates them to continue learning.

3. JUSTIFICATION

In the last year of University the every Primary Education student is required to spend twelve weeks in a school as a Training Teacher. During these three months the young teachers work in a real school environment learning from a primary education teacher, other teacher colleagues and from the pupils themselves. The Training Teachers will put into practice, and develop what they learned in their courses as well as demonstrate and prove the skills they have acquired throughout their degree.

The Primary Education degree's aim is to train professionals with the capacity to attend to the educational needs of primary education students and to create pedagogic proposals according to the current law in Spain; the LOMCE (Ley Organica para la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa) or the LOE (Ley Orgánica de Educación) in some cases. The professionals will need to confront their professional challenges and adapt their teachings to the new necessities and the changes in society.

There are four general objectives of the primary education degree from the University of Valladolid, which the Faculty of Education of Palencia belongs to, which adapt themselves perfectly to this present paper:

- *“Design, plan, adapt and assess teaching- learning processes for pupils with specific needs.”*

The project designed and expressed in this paper was created specifically for pupils that had special needs in the subject of literacy.

- *“Approach multicultural and plurilingual learning situations, and encourage reading and a critical view on texts of different scientific and cultural contents.”*

The setting in which this project took place was a bilingual school. The project focuses primarily on the reading acquisition of pupils with delayed reading abilities in the first stages of reading.

- *“Design and regulate learning spaces in contexts where there is diversity, attending to gender equality, equal respect to human right that are basic to the education of citizens”*

The pupils with whom this project was developed were in a sense the “diversity” or the “different” in the classroom context. They were pupils with different learning capabilities and skills, and to normalize their situation facing their classmates was also a goal of the training teacher.

- *“Reflect upon the practices that take place in the classroom to innovate and improve the teachings. Acquire habits and abilities for the pupils’ autonomous and cooperative learning and promote it between the pupils.”*

The approach the training teacher took with the pupils’ learning development always tried to have an innovative way of learning, using different methods.

The present paper focuses on the accomplishments of one Training Teacher during his internship concerning his effort with the development of pupils with learning difficulties and their delayed reading skills; presenting these pupils with alternative ways for them to practice their reading and comprehensive understanding of the text. Literacy has always been of great interest for the Training Teacher, and literature and reading are two elements of language that the author of this paper feels very passionate about; it was therefore very important for the Training Teacher that the pupils are motivated and enjoy the activity of reading and that they are aware of their progress and their achievements.

3.1. SCHOOL CONTEXT

The school where the Training Teacher spent three months is a public Infant and Primary School located in the capital of a small northern province in Spain, in a working-class neighbourhood. The school however has pupils from all over the city and from neighbouring villages because of the special features and characteristics of the school.

The school takes part in many different programs, but the program that distinguishes the school from others is the Bilingual Program that follows the integrated Spanish-British program, in collaboration with the British Council. In accordance with this program, the teachers of the school work according to a combination of the British Curriculum and the Spanish Curriculum, which dictates a different way of approaching and working in each subject, as well as the timetables of the school.

Pupils in this school learn, not only the foreign language, but they learn in this language the contents of the basic subjects and develop skills using the English language as a vehicle for this.

All the school years, including the infant education years receive a bilingual education, and the education avoids returning to different approaches that go back to the monolingual education in Spanish. This is done by promoting teamwork and coordination between the English specialists and the group tutors

Because the school works with the British Council, external teachers are hired to teach in both infant and in primary education. These teachers are linguistic consultants and are specialized in the English language and work coordinated with the class tutors.

Literacy lessons in both, the Spanish and the English languages are therefore very important, and they follow a plurilingual perspective when planning these lessons using a clear pattern, separated into three levels so that the pupils receive and acquire knowledge on all three levels. Literacy is always planned at text level, followed by the sentence level and ending at the word level.

3.2. CLASSROOM CONTEXT

The Training Teacher spent his internship with the first cycle of primary education, in the second form. The classroom is located on the first floor of the school on the right wing of the building in the corridor of the first cycle. The classroom is large and rectangular with six big south facing windows. The desks are in the centre of the classroom with the main wall being the west wall where the boards and the teacher's desk are. The rest of the walls are for storage. At the back of the classroom there is a small carpet area where the Training Teacher developed his projects and did the activities with his materials with the pupils.

The walls of the classroom are covered with displays of pupils' projects and artwork, resources and prompts to help them build language whenever the pupils need the support as well as significant mediators. During the course of the Training Teacher's research some of the mediators have been very useful and necessary when the pupils were carrying out their reading activities.

On a wall of the classroom there is the very important symbolism of the British flag next to the Spanish flag, the lesson snake, classroom management posters such as the captain and "Convi" poster, a show and tell poster, literacy resources, such as the word of the week, class rules and punctuation. Another wall had vocabulary posters with numbers, colours, adjectives and actions as well as an emotion check mediator with symbols of feelings so pupils learned to express their feelings.

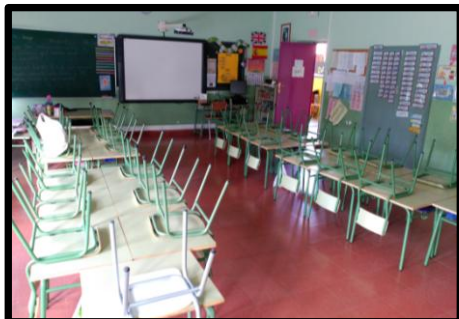


Image: Classroom 2B



Image 2: Carpet area where the project took place

3.3. PUPILS' CONTEXT

The Training Teacher spent the same amount of time in both groups of the second form of the school, and this academic research took place during the literacy lessons, when two pupils of each group were doing a significant curricular adaptation. These significant curriculum adaptations were already taking place when the teacher began his internship, and they consisted of activities involving rhyme connections. Pupils worked on printable worksheets where they read the words with their attached image and matched them to other words that rhymed.

The curricular significant adaptation took place during the literacy sessions at the back of the classroom where literacy was being taught. Each of the four children that needed this adaptation had their own individual difficulties with school and their own issues but all four pupils had one thing in common; these pupils were children that couldn't keep up with the class in the subject of literacy. They didn't understand the teacher and would drift off and daydream, they wouldn't do the tasks set by the teacher and didn't really know what to do and how to do it.

The four pupils had a delay in their reading skills. Their reading was purely mechanical, they didn't understand what they read and their reading was based on the sounds, like in the Spanish language where "you read, how you write". There was no diagnosis that any of the four pupils had an intellectual disability, however one of these pupils has diagnosed ADHD, and was medicated when the research was taking place. His lack of attention is what caused him to sit in class almost in a trance. His behaviour was not disruptive; he didn't cause unsettledness during the lessons but this pupil wasn't achieving the set targets.

This case was similar for two other pupils, but these were not diagnosed with any disorder but they had a serious deficit in their capacity of attention and concentration. The fourth pupil had problems strictly on her reading. Her reading skills were delayed in both languages, so much so, that in Spanish she couldn't read anything but in English she would make an effort and try.

The young teacher began working with these pupils from the first day of his internship. It only seemed appropriate for the young teacher to expand that initial curricular adaptation and to design and implement the materials the Training Teacher elaborated in order to achieve similar goals the curricular adaptation had; for those pupils with difficulties in reading and in the English language to gradually progress and accomplish their full potential.

4. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

4.1. READING

The aim of the primary education stage is for children to attain the competence needed to advance further in making a contribution to society. The reading competence in pupils and therefore in society is central to the teaching-learning process, and because reading forms the basis for the other areas of learning. Children in the primary school years must achieve a level of proficiency in reading by the end of their primary school years.

This need of proficiency in reading arises not only from the negative impact the failure of early reading has on the cognitive development¹ (Cunningham, Stanovich, 1998) of children, but also from the increasing demands for literacy in our technological society² (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998); Children who grow up to adults with lower levels of literacy are at a clear disadvantage in a society that requires a level of proficiency of reading skills in the everyday life and at work.

When a child is learning how to read, what the child is doing is, in essence, learning a writing system; a writing system that represents speech. The English language follows an alphabetical system, and to read in an alphabetical system requires learning the

¹ Cunningham, A.E., & Stanovich, K.E. (1998). What reading does for the mind. *American Educator*, 22, 8-15

² Snow, C.E., Burns, M.S., & Griffin, P. (1998). Preventing reading difficulties in young children. Washington, DC: National Academy Press

alphabetic principle, where the language is associated to meaningless units of the language; phonemes and graphemes. (Perfetti, Marron, 1998)

These segments, the phonemes and graphemes on their own have no meaning, they are used in producing speech and understanding the language and provide structure to the language, but it's the use of the language that gives words meaning, leaving the graphemes in the background.

Once a child is aware of these differences and what causes them, the child has achieved a phonological awareness. Numerous studies have shown that there is a clear link between learning to read and having this phonological awareness.³(Perfetti, Marron, 1998)

To comprehend written material, children need to be able to identify the words to convey meaning, and they must be able to construct meaning once they have identified the individual words in print. Gough (1996)⁴ in his summarized the two skills:

Reading consists of two parts. One is recognizing the words on the page, the other is understanding those words once you have recognized them, reading equals the product of decoding (D) and comprehension (c) or $R = D \times C$ (p.4)

Beyond the understanding and the knowledge of the phonological structure for reading acquisition, there are elements to reading that prove progress in the child's progress: the child's increasing ability to read words.

Teaching reading is a matter of helping children learn to "construct meaning" and to "use their prior learning and experience to make sense of texts"(Goodman, 1986)⁵ It is a linguistic skill that, with rare exceptions, is learned only after children have acquired considerable proficiency in oral language. This can present young pupils many

³ Perfetti, C.A., Marron, M.a. (1998). Learning to read; Literacy acquisition by children and adults. In D.A. Wagner(Ed.) Advances in adult literacy research and development. Hampton Press. (p.9)

⁴ Gough, P.B. (1996) How children learn to read and why they fail. Annals of Dyslexia, 46, 3-20

⁵ Goodman, K. (1986) What's whole in whole language? Exeter, NH: Heinemann

difficulties, when they are beginning readers and additionally are learning how to read, in a foreign language, like English.

Pupils can find difficulties when they are beginning to learn how to read with the understanding of how words in their oral language are represented in print, this can be due to them not making a connection between the sounds in words and the letters used to represent those sounds in prints.⁶(Siegel, 1989). The children may experience difficulties in learning to sound out and pronounce words or use phonetic cues to help decipher them. This can limit the ability to read independently and accurately in the pupil's first years of school.

Phonemic decoding skills play a critical supporting role as children begin to acquire the orthographic reading skills that enable relatively fluent and effortless identification of words in text. To recognise a word orthographically is to recognise it by sight as a whole unit. Another reading difficulty is the limitation in the number of words pupils know in the language as well as the ability to process the phonological features of the language.

4.2. HOW CHILDREN LEARN TO READ

4.2.1. Theories of learning to read

The current view of reading, based on cognitive principles, emphasizes the child as an active learner, capable of integrating information with existing knowledge, and capable of engaging in self monitoring procedures, thereby making the process child-centred.

According to the cognitive perspective, in the reading process, the learning is based on the learner's state of language development, where the learner constructs his or her own meaning. The learning process is learner-activated and motivation is self directed. It is always learner driven; meaning that the learner, the pupil, is the protagonist and the one that dictates the learning process, according to the pupil's needs and capacities.

⁶ Siegel, L.S. (1989). IQ is irrelevant to the definition of learning disabilities, *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 22, 469-479

According to this perspective the learning is holistic, where the pupils find identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community and to the natural world. The learning process therefore has a focus on the pupils' lives, what is relevant and important to them and is problem solving. ⁷(Wren, 2001)

4.2.2. Interactive model of the reading process

There are three models of the reading process; the bottom- up, the top-down and the interactive.⁸ (Rumelhart, McClelland, 1981)

The bottom-up model emphasizes the recognition of words, and considers comprehension as information obtained solely from the text. This model understands language by looking at individual meanings or grammatical characteristics of the most basic units of the text and moves from these to trying to understand the whole text.

The top-down model views the process of reading as predictions and comprehension is obtained by reorganizing the meaning given to the reading. This model teaches students to read by introducing them to literature as a whole. Instead of reading by sounding out each word in a sentence, whole passages of a text are read.

The interactive model views reading as involving both the bottom-up and top-down models, and the process of reading comprehension as the interaction of the reader and the text, depending on the particular situation.

The top- down model of teaching reading fits into the cognitive perspective, and the method that was used by the training teacher during his internship while he developed this research program and implemented it in his design while working with pupils and developing their reading skills.

⁷ Wren, S. (2001), *The Cognitive Foundations of Learning to Read: A Framework*. Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

⁸ Rumelhart, D.E& McClelland, J.L (1981) *The interactive Process in Reading.. Program in Cognitive Science, Univerity on California, San Diego*

4.3. TEACHING READING

4.3.1. Methods

In the English language there are two main methods of how reading is taught in schools; Phonics Instruction and Whole Language.

Phonics Instruction is a reading teaching method that focuses on the correspondences between letters and phonemes or sounds. There are fixed rules to use in reading and spelling. Reading beginners understand how written words are linked to sounds and there are patterns of letter sound-correspondences. Usually, when this method is being used, the teacher follows a particular order when introducing spellings for different sounds, beginning with the simplest or most common patterns.

The Whole Language approach is considered a philosophy of teaching and guidance.⁹(Heineman, 1985) The teacher provides students with their appropriate level of challenge, so that the approach is successful.¹⁰(Stahl, Kuhn, 1995) This method is learner centred and the role of the teacher is to help students engage in learning and make sense of their experiences.

The Whole Language approach is “meaning centred”, where “Natural learning situations and whole- to-part learning” are crucial.¹¹(Danbury,2005) In this methodology children recognise words as whole components of the language. Here, language is not broken into letters or syllables and the reading is never “decoded” language.

This second approach, the Whole Language method was the one pursued by the Training Teacher when conducting his research with the pupils. He believes that language and in particular, reading has to be learned within a context following a

⁹ Heineman, J.M. (1985). Whole language. Retrieved February 9, 2007 from http://www.funderstanding.com/whole_language.cfm

¹⁰ Stahl, S. & Kuhn, M. (1995). Does whole language or instruction matched to learning styles help children learn to read? *School Psychology Review*. 24(3). Retrieved February 9, 2007 from EBSCOhost.

¹¹ Danbury Public School. (2005). Glossary of terms to promote a common language. Retrieved February 9, 2007 from <http://bbacx1.danbury.k12.ct.us/currweb/glossary/xyz.html>

holistic approach based on the pupil's reality and knowledge. He understands language as a whole, as a system where each pupil makes meaning with words which work with each other within that particular context which is the text pupils read.

4.3.2. Hands-on Learning and Play

Hands on learning or experimental learning are based on the constructivist theory by Jean Piaget¹². Hands-on learning is learning by doing, where the learning process is a total learning experience. Here, the pupils become active participants working with actual materials, where pupils manipulate things, move them around and think of new possibilities of things and enhances the students' thinking process enabling the pupils to become critical thinkers.

This method is usually applied to the scientific area of the school curriculum, where pupils investigate and think of broader ways of how things work by observation and experimentation of the possibility of things. Although the present research is about literacy and the learning process of reading, this approach has been incorporated. The pupils worked with materials created by the Training Teacher, which enabled them to manipulate and move around freely, making a learning experience from their reading sessions with the young teacher.

The materials the pupils worked with was a book in the form of a puzzle and a set of puzzle pieces for each pupil; where pupils matched the sentence to the corresponding image. From this, reading turned into a game. Play is essential and natural in the life of every child. Jean Piaget sees play as an expression and a prerequisite for a child's development.

Dr. Ovide Decroly¹³ emphasized the practical applications of what was in fact a tool for teaching. From this the active teaching methods based on Celestin Freinet's research¹⁴

¹² Jean Piaget, (1945) *La formation du symbole chez l'enfant*, Neuchhel Park, Delachux et Niestlé.

¹³ O. Decroly and Miss Monchamp (1937), *L'initiation d l'activitd intellectuelle et mofrice par les jeux Cducatifs*, NeucMtel Paris, Delachaux et Niestli.

prevailed, promoting a form of education highlighted by the spirit of play, that is to say enthusiasm, creativity, discovery.

4.3.3. Using Multiple Intelligence for Learning Literacy

The Multiple Intelligences Theory, according to Howard Gardner is concerned with differences in the process of learning; they include the areas of Linguistic Intelligence, Spatial Intelligence, Bodily Kinaesthetic Intelligence, Musical Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, Intrapersonal Intelligence, and Naturalistic Intelligence.

This theory relates thinking with learning, meeting the needs of all the pupils. This can be accomplished if teachers help children to use their combination of the intelligences to be successful in school, making it a student-centred approach. The varying facets of multiple intelligences help children to understand differences in individuals, and create the opportunity for individuals to use their strengths to work on weaknesses. This gives each learner an opportunity to experience success, and be motivated and creative.

With this approach children are given the chance to become involved with the activities that take place, with the planning and the execution of what is done, according to the pupil's needs and interests, what motivates them and what "works" better with how they learn and what intelligences the pupils are stronger in.

This was taken very much into consideration by the teacher when he designed activities that could be carried out with the pupils, designing activities that worked with as many of the multiple intelligences as possible. The intelligences this project specifically works with is the bodily kinaesthetic and spatial intelligence, with the different activities that involve manipulation of materials and experimentation as well as the linguistic intelligence, that is being developed throughout the research

¹⁴ C. Freinet (1956), *Les méthodes naturelles de la pédagogie moderne*, Paris, Editions Bourrelieir.

4.3.4 The Emotional Intelligence

The emotional intelligence is a psychological theory popularised by Daniel Goleman, after the publishing of his book “Emotional Intelligence”(1996). To be emotionally intelligent means that a person is able to manage their emotions, they are in touch with their feelings, how they feel and what makes them feel that way, and they are have an awareness for the emotions of others. Emotional intelligence can also be referred to as emotional literacy, where one is aware that emotions influence our behaviour and can have a positive or a negative impact on people, it is therefore key to learn how to manage those emotions.

Daniel Goleman states that emotional literacy should be taught in school, because according to him social and emotional learning improves the pupils’ social and emotional abilities, but it also lowers violence rates and would make children better behaved and have a more positive outlook on learning.¹⁵

There are five domains of emotional intelligence that are relevant to the present project:

- Empathy: is the capacity of understanding how and why other people feel the way they do, and treating them according to their reactions.
- Social skills: is being able to manage relationships and building social relationships by finding common interests.
- Self awareness: is the ability to understand one’s own moods and emotions as well as their effect on others
- Self motivation: is the passion to work and achieve happiness and joy from doing what one does and to have a curiosity of learning
- Self management: is being able to control one’s impulses and emotions, as well as thinking before acting and break off judgements towards other people.

The last three domains having special significance to this research design as the three involve the pupil’s self image, and how they felt about themselves. Enhancing the pupil’s self-confidence and their self-esteem was, after improving the pupil’s reading skills, the aspect the young teacher wanted to teach through and instil in the pupils.

¹⁵ Goleman, D. (2014). *About Daniel Goleman. On his own words.*

5. METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

5.1 METHODOLOGY

5.1.1. Research

This paper is focused on the development of reading acquisition in a small group of four children who had a delay in their reading skills. The setting where this small investigation took place was a school; an educational context. Education and specifically the education of foreign languages, of the English foreign language to be more specific is the field of study of the author of this document.

In order to write this paper intensive research had to be done. The natural methodology followed when developing this research was the qualitative research. What interested the teacher trainer when he was working with the four pupils was not numbers or statistics, but rather more complex elements that have to do with education. The context this research was developed in was very specific. The pupils the author worked with had very particular needs and required a tailored design adapted to them.

This paper was developed doing, on one hand practical research and on the other hand, theoretical. The practical research was the first one that took place, during the three months the author spent doing his internship as a Training Teacher, while he worked with these four pupils. This research was done doing extensive observations of the pupils. He wanted to see first and foremost how the reading abilities of the pupils were when they first began, and how it was after a few weeks working on this method, it was important to see their development, but it was even more important for the teacher, to observe how they responded to what he had designed for them; how their behaviour was and what their attitude was towards the activities they did.

The second part of the research was the theoretical research, which happened after the internship had finished. For this part, the teacher needed to investigate and read articles and documents that would support his work. For this, the author spent two months reading and collecting countless documents and articles that helped him put into

“academic” words everything he had done, the more he read the more questions appeared and the more he needed to document himself.

5.1.2. The Significant Curricular Adaptation

This research took place, like mentioned before, during the hours of literacy, and it happened at the same time and in the same classroom as literacy lessons were being taught. These pupils were children who had a low level of the English language and had additionally to that, severe reading delays. When the young teacher began his internship, these four pupils had significant curricular adaptation, which they were working on.

A significant curricular adaptation is an educational strategy, where there is an “adaptation” of the education goals, contents can be deleted or included, and the method to be followed is decided and the evaluation criteria is modified. This educational strategy lets each student achieve general capacities challenging the pupil’s potential in accordance to his/her potential. Every curricular adaptation has to be made after having developed a complete evaluation of each pupil’s needs and an individualized curriculum proposal.¹⁶ (Alonso, 1999)

5.1.3. Targets

The bilingual school, where this research was carried out follows the integrated Spanish-British program, in collaboration with the British Council, and in accordance with this program, each Primary School’s cycle has very specific targets, regarding the linguistic aspects of the curriculum the pupils should achieve.

Here are some of the general cycle and year-specific targets concerning reading capacities from that curriculum that the pupils could not achieve.

First cycle targets:

- Understand simple oral and written texts relative to objects, situations and happenings using global and specific information

¹⁶ Juan, A., Alonso, 1999. A Differentiated Program: Significant Curricular Adaptations

- Read in a comprehensive manner short simple texts related to activities in the classroom, to knowledge children have of the world and their experiences and interests to achieve information
- Establish relations between the meaning the pronunciation and graphic representation of words and sentences in the English language, as well as to recognize rhythmic ,intonation and sound characteristics

Year two specific targets the pupils had difficulties achieving:

- Reinforce and apply their capabilities on a Word level with guided and collective Reading
- Use their phonological, contextual, grammatical and graphical knowledge to resolve, predict and check the meaning of words and understand what they are reading.
- Read with enough concentration to complete the text and identify preferences.

Most of these targets presented a real challenge for the four pupils the Training Teacher worked with during his internship. These targets encompassed two competences that were very difficult for these four pupils; working with the English language-communicating with it, using it to express themselves orally and in the written form and the reading competence these pupils had so many difficulties with, therefore for them reading in English was a double difficulty.

It was clear that new targets had to be established for the group this project was designed for. These targets had to be adequate for the pupils' reading capacities. They had to be attainable but they also had to present the pupils with a challenge, being slightly more complex than what they were used to but achievable at the same time.

The targets presented for this project were, for the Training Teacher, somewhat bittersweet, because while this project ideally has a duration of many months or even a full school year, the project with the pupils could only last what the teacher's internship in the school lasted; less than three months by the time the project was running.

These targets don't only have to do with the competence of reading but also with how the children respond to reading emotionally: in their attitude, their motivation and the pleasure they can derive from the act of reading.

The targets for these four particular pupils are as follow:

- Read aloud precisely.
- Identify the different words, and what they stand for in their level of understanding.
- Identify the pronunciation of different phonemes and how they are articulated verbally (such as silent letters, vowel sounds etc.).
- Read accurately the text provided, with the correct intonation and the stress pattern.
- Understand what they are reading.
- Relate the written text with the illustration and match the corresponding elements.
- Retell and explain the illustration.
- Say how they feel about what they are reading.
- Feel motivated and excited about the reading game.
- Notice their progress on their reading abilities.

5.1.4. Assessment

The student's assessment is a key element to any teaching design that takes place in a classroom learning context. In this particular design, where reading development is the focus of the project, a series of concepts that are key to the reading competence must be acquired and therefore assessed, such as letter knowledge, phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, and comprehension.¹⁷ (DeBruinParecki, 2004)

The assessment of these four pupils' reading has served for numerous purposes: one purpose is to identify skills that need review; teachers observe what skills students have not yet acquired. The assessment monitors student progress and guides the teacher with

¹⁷ DeBruinParecki, A. (2004). Evaluating early literacy skills and providing instruction in a meaningful context. *High/Scope Resource: A Magazine for Educators*, 23(3), 510.

instruction, helping the teacher learn what type of instruction and command are adequate for which pupil. The assessment was also key for the teacher to know what instructions were effective on the pupils and how these instructions could be improved.

J Richard Gentry (2000)¹⁸ suggests the following elements as assessment criteria for reading acquisition for young learners:

- Listening Comprehension
- Exposure to Print
- Reading Comprehension
- Phonemic Awareness
- Knowledge of the Alphabet
- Beginning Phonics Knowledge
- Word Specific Knowledge
- Writing
- Spelling
- Ideas and World Knowledge
- Attitudes about Reading and Writing

The assessment of the pupil's reading abilities and progress occurred mainly after extensive observation and analysis of how pupils read; how they responded to the act of reading and the activity that was taking place.

Various types of assessments for different areas of early reading took place:

- The letter knowledge and the ability to associate sounds with letters.
- The phonemic awareness as the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in words and how sounds make words.
- The decoding as the process of using letter-sound correspondences to recognize words.
- The fluency as the automatic ability to read words in text
- The reading comprehension.

¹⁸ Gentry, J. R. (2000), *The Literacy Map: Guiding Children to Where They Need to Be (K-3)*. New York: Mondo.

5.1.5 Motivation and Self Concept

A key element for the young teacher, while he was working intensively with the pupils was not only for the pupils, to learn how to be competent readers, although that is what drove this project from the first moment, but also to spark in the children an uplifting image of themselves and positive self concept. These were children that had troubles with their learning and had been faced with negativity because of their learning delay.

During literacy they sat in the back of the classroom doing completely different tasks than the rest of their classmates, this may have made them feel different and left out from the class group. It was therefore imperative for these lessons with the Training Teacher, that the pupils felt like they worked in a safe and positive environment, and it was an aim to motivate the pupils externally, from the teacher, and for the pupils to then be capable of motivating themselves intrinsically.

It is assumed by multiple theorists that motivation involves the performance of the pupil's learned responses, and that it is a learned behaviour that needs to be externally energized, and that is where the teacher stepped in. The response the teacher wanted to reflect upon the children was always of positivity; correcting the pupils' mistakes but with encouragement and celebrating with the pupils' their small successes. The response of the teacher was always on an emotional and caring level where he would gesture success, with intonation or simply with a smile.

This emotional response from the teacher occurred intentionally in the beginning stages of the project, as the pupils eventually felt confident enough and had a positive response to how they worked or to what they were doing. The teacher purposely didn't want his positive emotional response to condition the pupils' learning and their progress in their reading capabilities.

5.2 DESIGN

5.2.1. The Resources

The reading and documentation of the theories that support any written paper is an essential stage in the research development. The Training Teacher pursued then, to take these new learned principles and in order to develop reading skills in a small support group of literacy, he needed to find appropriate reading material for these pupils and develop from this text, resources and materials that would help him and his pupils attain the set targets. After countless children's books read, he found what he was looking for; he wanted a book or a series or publication that has an appropriate text level for these beginner readers, and he found it imperative that the text came accompanied with a significant illustration that would facilitate the pupil's reading and comprehension and would be engaging and motivating for the pupils.

The book selected is from the publishing house "Oxford University Press", and is especially designed for primary education beginning readers, titled "Floppy's Fun Phonics". The book follows the Phonics Instruction method, which is a method that stresses the acquisition of letter sound correspondences and how they are used in reading and spelling. However, like mentioned in the Theoretical Foundation section of this paper, the approach the teacher preferred to follow was the Whole Language approach, where the text and the pupil's learning is meaning centred and where the read language was understood as a whole, as a system where each pupil makes meaning with words which work with each other in a context.

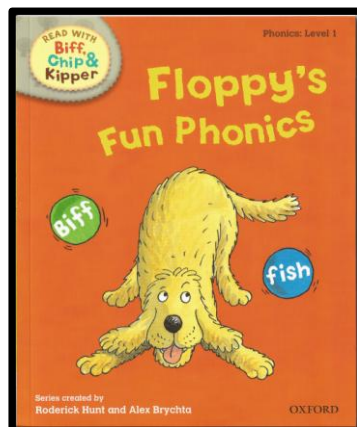


Image3: Resource 1- Floppy's Fun Phonics. Book selected for this design

Another reason why this book was chosen was because all the book's characters were known to the pupils, as they are characters they work with in their literacy class, making this a more integrated learning for them. What caught the attention of the young teacher when he was researching books and picked this particular one up was its format. It had a very interesting layout, because on one side of the page there was a sentence or two, and on the other an image, the children had to read and match the sentences to the images. The sentences and images were in a puzzle piece. There would usually be an odd one out piece, or two pairs of puzzle pieces the pupils would have to match. On some pages the sentences were quite similar, this made the pupils take their time and think before they matched the image to the sentence.

For the Training Teacher, how the pupils learned and interacted with the activity of reading was very important. It was clear that he wasn't going to follow the traditional ways of teaching and wanted to integrate new ways of learning, incorporating as many of the multiple intelligences as possible and transforming the learning experience into an enriching game. To do this, more materials had to be created to complete all these requirements the teacher set himself when designing this project.

The first thing that was created was a handout of the book. This handout would be chronologically ordered, like the book itself, and with the pages of the puzzle pieces the book had and with additional blank pieces the pupils would use for a later activity. The last resource created and the star material "par excellence" used in this project was a set for each of the four students of the individual puzzle pieces cut onto card. This material would allow the teacher to observe very closely and clearly how the pupils were progressing with their reading and watch the motivated pupils interact and play while they read.

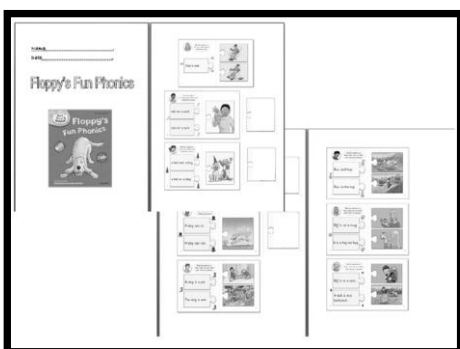


Image 4: Resource 2- Handout



Image 5: Resource 3- Puzzle Set

5.2.2 Activities

Every activity that took place in this project involved reading; it was key to let the pupils do the silent reading on their own first, and then to hear them read aloud. Everything the pupils read was done in this way using both methods. Silent reading furthers the children to develop thought and it encouraged the pupils to work autonomously and independently and to feel self sufficient.

Reading aloud was extremely important after the pupils had read in silent, because it is where the teacher can really observe the pupils' progress. When reading aloud, the teacher would correct the pupils' intonation and pronunciation and would listen carefully to how the pupils articulated the vowel sounds.

In general every lesson consisted of one or a combination of these activities, and on a same day the teacher would try to incorporate the tree materials in the activity sequence, using the puzzle set, the hand-out as well as the puzzle set. The activities involving the puzzle set usually began with ACTIVITY 1 or a slight variation of this activity.

ACTIVITY ONE: Fist Contact

Specific Targets

- Listening attentively to the story
- Describing pictures
- Predicting the storyline and some vocabulary, aided by the illustrations
- Telling a story from the pictures

Description

The first activity that took place when the project began was the introduction to what the pupils' would be working on with the Training Teacher the following months. For this activity the teacher sat between the two students and showed them the book. Here he asked what they saw in the cover and encourage them to answer and explain in detail what they saw (It's a dog. His name is Floppy. He is yellow. He has a red collar, etc.). While they read together and as the pages turned the pupils would describe the puzzle

illustrations and the teacher would slowly read the phrases in the book. After the book was finished each of the pupils took turn in reading the phrases and would match the puzzle pieces, text to image. Afterwards the pupils had some time to read the book in silence.

For the rest of the activities the teacher would sit in front of the pupils, this was done intentionally so that the teacher could communicate with the pupils better when they had any questions and so that the teacher could observe, and “read” the pupils facial expression and their emotional response to the activity.

ACTIVITY 2: “Puzzle Matching”

Specific Targets

- Using picture clues to help in reading simple texts.
- Matching image to text, implying comprehension.
- Using story sequence as a cue.
- Using pictures to tell the story.
- Making the effort to read the text aloud.

Description

The second activity that took place was with the puzzle set. Each pupil was gradually given the puzzle pieces in the order as they appeared in the book, page by page. The pupils had therefore three or four puzzle pieces laid on the table and they would have to read the texts aloud and think about the corresponding image. The two pupils took turns reading their first pages, then their second pages, their third and so on. Once the pupils had completed matching all the puzzle cards they would read them once again in order quietly pointing to the matching cards and out loud.

ACTIVITY 3: “What goes where?”

Specific Targets

- Identifying and correlate text and image
- Reading out loud using correct stress patterns
- Matching phrase to illustration appropriately
- Using picture clues to help their reading

Description

This activity takes the previous activity to the next level. The teacher would lay all the image puzzle pieces on the table, and one by one in no particular order, the teacher would give each pupils a text puzzle piece. The teacher would encourage the pupil to read the text out loud and to associate what they read with the image the pupils know and lay the card next to the matching image. The teacher made sure to give each pupil different cards as they would listen to what their classmate was reading and copy where they placed the card.



Images 6&7: Activity photographs- Working with the puzzle sets

ACTIVITY 4: “Role- play”

Specific Targets

- Listening to classmate carefully
- Being fully aware of phonology and pronunciation
- Being helpful and give constructive criticism
- Reading attentively and clearly

Description

This activity required just the book and it was for the pupils something quite different to what they had done in a classroom setting before. It was a pair work activity that consisted of role-play. The task set was quite simple, but required great concentration from the pupils. In this task one of the pupils took the role of the teacher, and the other of the student; the student had to read out loud and the teacher had to read with the student and correct any mistakes. The Training Teacher supervised this activity closely and stepped in any time the “teacher-pupil” forgot to correct their classmate

ACTIVITY 5: “Read this picture”

Specific Targets

- Reading most words quickly and accurately
- Checking that the text makes sense to them
- Being encouraged to link what they read to what they know
- Using picture clues to help remember and understand the simple text

Description

Using all the puzzle pieces laid out matched with their corresponding image and text, the Training Teacher would take the book out and show the pupils an image from the book. The pupils then had to look through all the pairs in front of them and read out loud the phrase that corresponds to the image shown. This exercise was very mechanical

for the pupils, but it was very effective because pupils were forced to read out loud. The teacher could identify the pupils' pronunciation and how their reading skills developed.

ACTIVITY 6: "Show me..."

Targets

- Listening carefully to the spoken language
- Identifying and relate what is being heard and what they read
- Retelling what has been heard
- Reading the phrases quickly and accurately, without sounding and blending
- Using phonic knowledge to identify vowel sounds and wording

Description

Similar to the activity before, this activity used the puzzle set each pupil has, and once more the activity began with the puzzle cards laid on the table facing them already ordered in the matching pairs. This time the teacher would play a modified version of before but instead of showing the pupils an image, they would play "show me", where the teacher reads one of the cards the pupils have on their tables. The pupils would read through their pairs, and point to the one the teacher said.

ACTIVITY 7: "Working on the handout"

Targets

- Re-reading the phrases to build up their fluency and confidence in word reading
- Linking what is being read with the image using a crayon to join
- Describing the pictures
- Using text cues to help with drawing
- Illustrating new phrases
- Answering literal questions about the text being read

Description

This activity involves the handout. The handout is a scanned version of the book organized into a pamphlet the pupils can work on. On paper the pupils have the chance to draw, colour, match and make mistakes without there being a negative response. On the top of the handout the pupils' fill in their data, like their name, class, date etc. This activity is the same activity as activity two where pupils match the phrase puzzle pieces to the illustrated pieces, only here the pupils can match the pieces using colour crayons and can colour the illustration. Some of the puzzle pieces are blank, and in these, the pupils can draw a matching illustration to the odd- one- out phrase that had no picture in the book. This is a support or review activity where pupils can reinforce what they have learned.



Images 8 & 9: Working on the handout

ACTIVITY 8: “Swapped!”

Targets

- Reading words quickly and accurately
- Paying close attention to the text the pupils have in front of them
- Careful examination of the words

- Explaining why a text does not match an image
- Words are used to retell the illustration
- Expressing themselves using phonic awareness

Description

This activity required the puzzle set, and apart from developing the reading skill it is planned to improve the pupil's attention span. It was mentioned before in the pupil's context that the four pupils the Training Teacher worked with had delayed reading skills, however additionally to that one of the pupils are diagnosed and medicated for ADHD. And for two of the other pupils, although there was no diagnosis, it was very clear working with them that they had an attention deficit. This was one of the pupils' aspects the teacher kept in mind and has very present when working with them. In this activity all the puzzle pairs are set on the table, they have been read and organised by the pupils themselves. The pupils were asked to look away from their desk, while the teacher swapped two puzzle pieces, or would insert one of the odd-one-out pieces. The pupils then had to scan through all of their pairs and read them to find the swapped cards.

ACTIVITY 9: "Hidden words"

Targets

- Words are read precisely and accurately
- The image and the rest of the sentence are used as clues for the missing word
- Checking that the new word makes sense to them and in the sentence
- Drawing on background information and vocabulary they already know
- Discussing word meanings, linking new meanings to those already known
- Thinking about new appropriate words that fit in the gap
- Retelling of what pupils read, and the new phrases they came up with

Description

This exercise uses the book to test the pupils' knowledge of vocabulary. Previously to the activity the teacher covered words from the text. The pupils would read the text and would say the word that is covered. Afterwards the teacher would ask the pupils to come up with new words that could also fit into that same gap. For example, different emotions: Dad is sad, Dad is *happy*, Dad is *angry*, *sleepy*, etc. Or different actions: A dog can sit, A dog can *run*, *sleep*, *eat*, etc. This activity developed the thinking skills in the pupils and without realising it the pupils were learning sentence structure and writing.

6. RESULTS

After documenting himself and researching on the various theories that support this project and after designing a specific methodology and elaborating materials to accompany this design, the project was implemented, and put into practice by the Training Teacher.

Attaining results of the project is not a simple task as this design would ideally take place over a long period of time, lasting from at least a full trimester to the entire school year. Additionally to the time constraint, because this research paper follows the qualitative method and not the quantitative, there are no numeric results to be analysed, the results of this research stem from the analysis of the observations the teacher carried out throughout the practical research, working with the children.

The results and the analysis of these observations have been organised regarding three main spectrums; the materials, the pupil's reading skills and the pupil's self concept.

6.1. REGARDING THE MATERIALS

Like mentioned before, the materials used for this project were developed after finding a book that was appropriate for the pupils and that fit the requirements the teacher planned. Apart from the book the two other resources used were self made by the teacher himself: the puzzle set for each of the pupils, and the handout.

The elaboration of each of the resources was not difficult, however it did take some time and they both had to be fully ready and complete by the time the project began, as the sessions with the pupils involved different activities with the three resources. Making the puzzle resource was probably the most tedious of the materials as there were numerous phrase- and picture- puzzle cards that needed to be precisely individually cut. The elaboration of the handout was simple. The teacher was lucky to find a digital version of the book on-line in the official “Oxford Owl” website. The book pages were saved onto a document and arranged in order, with a title page and blank puzzle pieces for activities developed with the pupils.

At first the pupils were reluctant to the new lessons they would have in the literacy lessons, they didn’t understand the reason behind this new activity and were unsure of its purpose. For the first encounter the Training Teacher had to think of ways of “selling” the pupils the sessions that were going to take place. As mentioned before, how pupils respond to the activities influences their learning and how the pupils feel, so it was important to keep the pupils excited.

When the teacher “suggested” the pupils that they were going to read a story and play games the pupils were excited and positive, however, during the first weeks some pupils still asked whether they would continue working with the rhyme connection booklets they were working on before the Training Teacher arrived.

As time progressed it was the pupils that dictated the activities they wanted to carry out. They would suggest playing games or would ask to use the book instead of the puzzle pieces. In some occasions, when the sequence of activities was repeated several times, they would tell the teacher what activity would go next.

There were occasions when for external reasons, the pupils could not work on the reading project with their Training Teacher; while the young teacher was doing his

internship, there were a few weeks where the timetables were swapped and changed due to school programmed activities such as the Cultural Week. On some occasions, when the literacy teacher would put on a short story film related to the literacy periods, the pupils who were doing the curricular adaptation would join the rest of the group to watch the video and discuss what they were watching.

It was in these moments when the pupils would ask the young teacher about the project and why it wasn't taking place on that day, and the pupils would express how they wanted to continue "playing".

By the end of the internship, once the pupils were told that the new teacher's time was up, and that he had to leave in the next weeks, the pupils would ask whether they would continue the project, reading and playing the games once the teacher was gone, because they had enjoyed it so much and wanted to continue.

All these small gestures and comments from the children indicated the impact working in different ways had in them and how it affected their learning. They started off being discouraged and with little motivation, and through this methodology of play, manipulation and a variety of activities, the teacher accomplished one of his personal goals with this project, which was to encourage the pupils with their learning and "wake them up" by making their learning experience fun and enticing.

6.2. REGARDING THE PUPIL'S READING SKILLS

When the young teacher first started working with the four pupils, the pupils were working on rhyme connections as the curricular adaptation. Working with rhyme connections introduced the pupils to reading and helped them understand how rhymes work, and what makes two words rhyme. They understood that two words rhyme when the ending syllables of the words sounded similar, and they also understood that two words can rhyme even if the final syllables don't have the same spelling.

However this method didn't really encourage and bring the pupils to read, so the Training Teacher found it ideal to introduce here his project, with the support of his

Tutor Teacher in the classroom. Because his design was very tailored and individualised, throughout the entire project, each of the pupils' progress went at their own pace. Each pupil was at a different level when the project began, and each developed their reading skill according to their capacities and took different amounts of time to achieve different goals.

When the teacher began his project the pupil's reading was in general purely mechanical. They could identify what they saw in the illustrations and explained it in their own level of the language and with a lot of effort and support. After doing the silent reading and after the pupils each took turn reading out loud, the pupils presented several difficulties during the first few weeks the project was taking place.

The pupils read in syllables and could not read a full sentence without getting stuck. The pupils had many difficulties understanding how English pronunciation is so different to the Spanish pronunciation. The children read each letter sound individually, like they would in Spanish, not realising that the vowel sounds in English had varying pronunciations, depending on the word structure.

At times the pupils would swap letters from the words and when the teacher corrected their mistakes the pupils would simply repeat what the teacher corrected without being aware of where they had misread the text and what their mistakes were, also when the pupils' were asked what they had just read and what they understood, the pupils had difficulties since, in those first stages of the process, they weren't doing comprehensive reading.

As the project progressed and more sessions were taking place, the different reading activities were being developed. The children began to be more and more receptive and had a more positive attitude towards the act of reading. Gradually, the pupils would begin to make connections in their minds between what the illustrations were showing them and what they were reading from the text.

On their own they began to understand specific vocabulary found in the book and found meaning behind what they read, leaving the significant image to a side. This was observed by the teacher when the activities that were being carried out involved the puzzle piece, where eventually the pupils would read the text and were capable of matching the phrase to the corresponding image.

The pupil's reading became more fluent with time, as the pupils were capable of reading the text almost without needing to pause and rethink about what a word meant and internalised the general meaning of the text. When they were asked about what they had read the pupils could explain, using similar vocabulary what the text was about. Additionally, the pupil's general pronunciation improved. The pupils were beginning to understand the general sounding of the main vowels and were capable almost of reading without needing the teacher's corrections.

Although the implementation of this project had a very short duration, the Training Teacher was already starting to see some results by the time his internship ended. Their general reading skills were improving, they understood that the English pronunciation had a different system to the Spanish, and were beginning to read non-mechanically. Also, the pupils' general reading comprehension saw many improvements as the children made meaning out of the written text.

6.3. REGARDING THE PUPIL'S SELF CONCEPT

As soon as the Training Teacher began working with the four pupils he realised that these pupils needed not only to improve their reading skills, but they also needed support with their self concept. The young teacher could observe that the four pupils didn't only have in common their reading delay, they also had a rather low self esteem, partly due to having this learning delay, combined with the personal issues each of the pupils were going through and the fact that they were working separated from the rest of their fellow classmates, possibly making them feel alienated and misunderstood. For the young teacher, it was key to enhance the pupils' self concept.

As mentioned before one of the pupils had a very specific need with this project, this little girl was capable of keeping focus and staying engaged during the sessions; she didn't have any sort of disorder. Her need was only reading. This girl had reading delays in both her mother tongue, Spanish and in the foreign language, only that in Spanish the girl was not capable of reading anything, while in the English language she made the effort and tried.

On one occasion, while a reading session was taking place, and she was actively taking part in the activities and reading, she turned to the teacher and said; "You know David, I

can't read." Surprised, the teacher looked at her and replied: "But, that is exactly what you are doing!" This statement from the girl occurred during the first few sessions of the project, and it took the young teacher so much by surprise, that he quickly realised this was something that needed to be worked on.

This was a pattern that all four of the pupils shared, and in order to overcome this, the teacher thought of alternative ways the pupils would feel motivated and happy of learning. He designed encouraging material and always kept a positive outlook upon the pupils while he worked with them. The environment the Training Teacher set was of safety and positivity, where learning is an experience that is to be enjoyed and where pupils take advantage of it and are able to fulfil their learning issues and delays.

In the beginning of the project, while the teacher was introducing the pupils with the book they would be working on and presented them with the materials they would play with, the teacher became aware of the pupils' introverted attitude towards learning. Two of the pupils had difficulties beginning to read, they were cautious with how they read. After almost everything the pupils read, they would constantly look at the teacher for his approval, waiting for a reaction. The teacher found that he needed to be encouraging, and take the role and constantly give positive feedback.

After the teacher realised this emotional need the pupils had, all the activities that were developed included positive reinforcement. With this positive environment the teacher created with his pupils, the next step was to induce in the pupils a sense of motivation, first coming from the teacher and eventually from the pupils themselves. At first the teacher needed to be the motivating person that encouraged the pupils reading, until eventually nearing the teacher's final weeks in his internship, it was the pupils themselves that were motivated and joyful with their learning.

7. CONCLUSION

The writing of this Final Project, this "TFG", is the culmination of the author's studies in order to be a Primary School teacher specialised in the teaching of the English foreign language. This document is the proof of the author's capacities; the writer of this document demonstrates that he has achieved the necessary competences; he

KNOWS (has conceptual knowledge), he KNOW HOW TO DO (has instrumental knowledge) and most importantly, he demonstrates he KNOWS HOW TO BE (relational and moral knowledge) a teacher.

Writing this document represents a lot of work. It took the author great responsibility as he learned continuously the four years that got him to where he stands today, with the knowledge, and experiences and learnings. The elaboration of this Final Project in itself was a great learning experience, as every day he learned new things, both during the practical research as well as in the later theoretical research and the translation of all those findings into the present paper.

This TFG, has a close relation to his great experience at his internship where he was given full trust and credit to do everything he had in mind for the four pupils he worked with, this has allowed his research project to be based on real experiences and the tremendous rewarding that implies, as the writer of this paper worked every day with young pupils, eager to learn and to interact with their new teacher.

This project had two very specific themes involving the small group he worked with; improving their reading skills, as well as helping them have a better self concept by being a positive role model and by enhancing the pupils' self-confidence. Although, as mentioned before, the project could only last so long, what the young teacher designed; the materials, as well as the specific activities that were developed for the pupils was in its entirety, successful.

The results obtained coincide with the previously established theories of reading and learning; the methodology for teaching reading selected; the cognitive perspective with the Whole Language perspective, treating the child as the centre of its learning and its needs, and approaching the learning process from that stand point; the great importance hands-on learning had to this project and Piaget's perspective of learning and how Decroly saw it: "play as a tool for teaching" or Gardner's Multiple Intelligences applied to the various activities or the importance of the emotional well being of the child and how to live and react to those feelings, based on Goleman's Multiple Intelligences

The pupil's reading skills improved; their comprehension, pronunciation as well as the general reading performance. As did the emotional aspect of the project, the pupils self

confidence was beginning to rise and they were becoming more joyful active and motivated pupils and members in their class groups.

This topic is a topic that continues to interest greatly the new teacher, and he only wishes his investigation with the pupils could have only been longer, however this will remain the teacher's field of interest, for many professional years to come.



Image 10: Photograph of two pupils and the teacher working with the puzzle games

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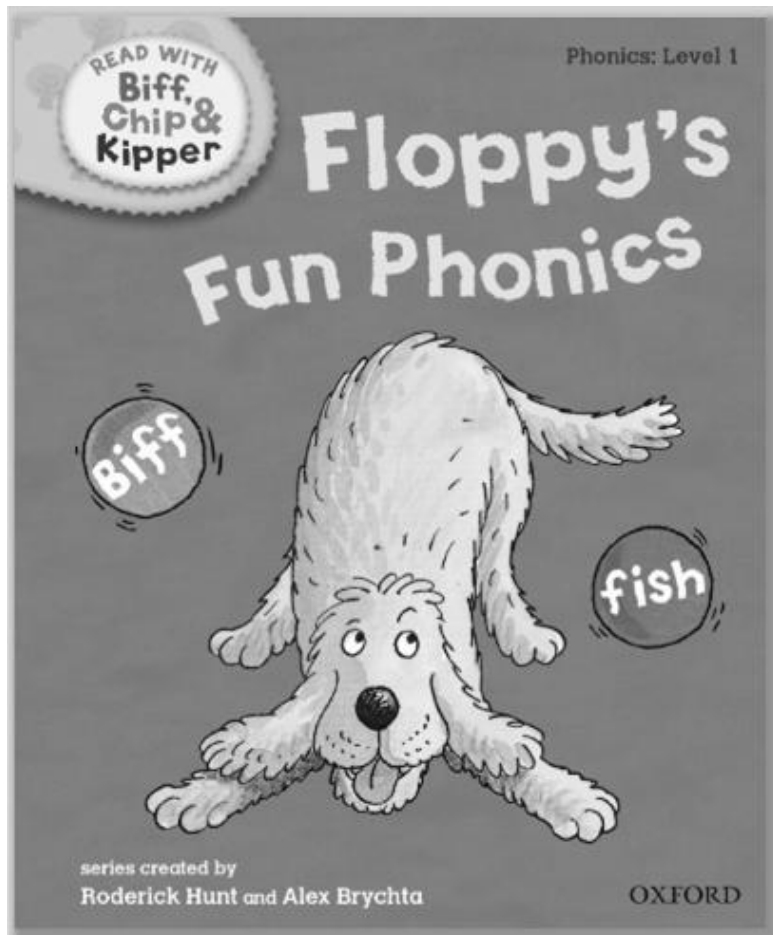
9. ATTACHMENTS

The handout booklet

Name: _____.

Date: _____.

Floppy's Fun Phonics



Read the sentence on this card. Which picture matches the card?

Dad is sad.

4

5

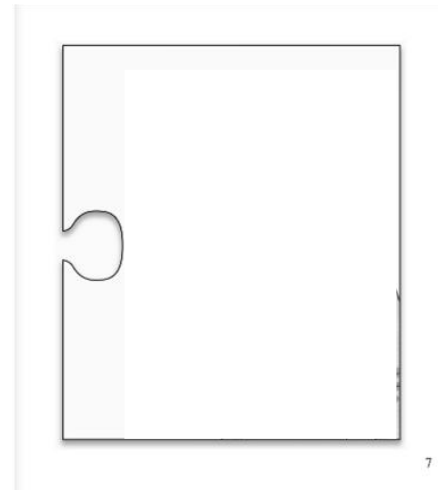
Read the captions on these cards. Which card matches the picture?

rats on a sack

cats on a sock

6

7

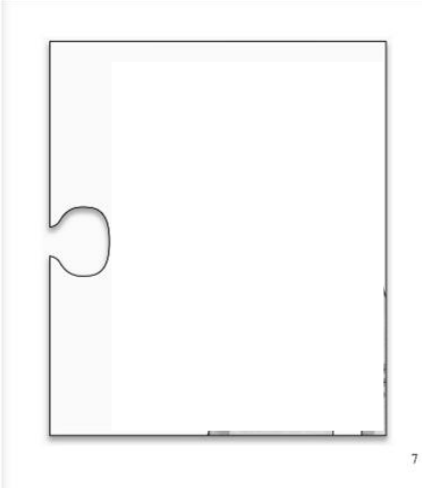


Read the captions on these cards. Which card matches the picture?

a hen and a bug

a hat on a dog

8 9

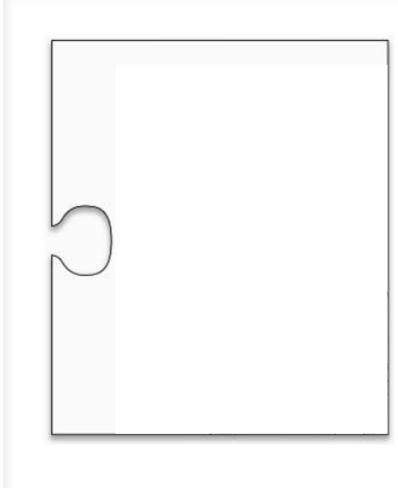


Read the sentences on these cards. Which card matches the picture?

Run in the sun.

Sit in the sun.

10 11




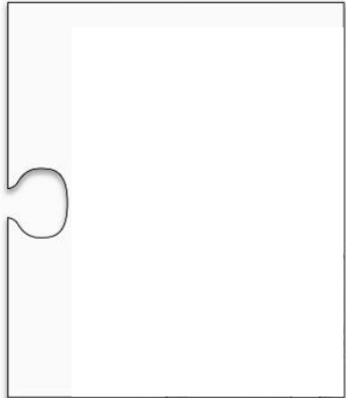
12

Read the sentences on these cards. Which card matches the picture?

A dog can sit.

A dog can run.

13



14

Read the sentences on these cards. Can you match each card to its picture?

A dog is a pet.

The dog is wet.

15

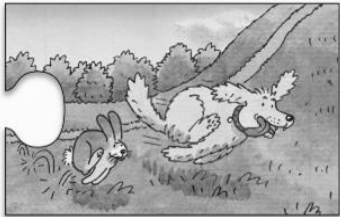

16

Read the sentences on these cards. Can you match each card to its picture?

Run and hop.

Run to the top.


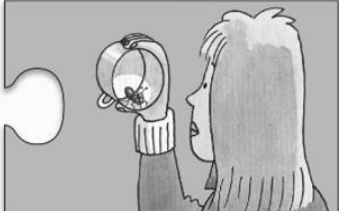
17

Read the sentences on these cards. Can you match each card to its picture?

Biff is on a mug.

It is a big red bug.

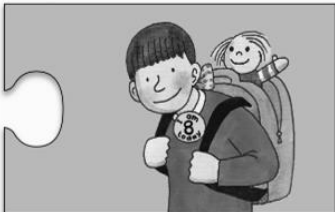




18 19

Read the sentences on these cards. Can you match each card to its picture?

Biff is in a sack.

A doll is in a backpack.

20 21