



FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN DE PALENCIA  
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**WORKING BASIC COMPETENCES FROM EARLY  
STAGES IN BILINGUAL SETTINGS.**

**El trabajo de las Competencias Básicas en Educación  
Infantil en un centro bilingüe.**

TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO  
MAESTRA EN EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL - MENCIÓN EN LENGUAS  
EXTRANJERAS: INGLÉS-

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*“The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence.”*

***Denis Waitley***

*“Nadie puede ser libre a menos que sea independiente, por lo tanto, las primeras manifestaciones activas de libertad individual del niño deben ser guiadas de tal manera que a través de esa actividad el niño pueda estar en condiciones para llegar a la independencia.”*

***Maria Montessori***

*“By applying characteristics of self awareness and self regulation since early childhood, we will educate our children on how to respect differences of opinions without resorting to personal attacks and how to accept others even when their attitudes, beliefs, values are different.”*

***Maqbool, Mudasir & Nabi***

## **ABSTRACT**

The present work is focused on the Basic Competences development within an Early Years group of children in a Bilingual British context which works with an Integrated Curriculum (Spanish – English). The main goal consists in that the children would get to be autonomous, responsible and social individuals.

## **RESUMEN**

El presente trabajo se centra en el desarrollo de las Competencias Básicas en un grupo de niños de Educación Infantil en un contexto Bilingüe British con un Curriculum Integrado (Español – Inglés). El principal objetivo consiste en que los niños consigan ser autónomos, responsables e individuos sociales.

## **KEYWORDS**

Basic Competences, Autonomy, Responsibility, Socializing, Emotional Intelligence, Thinking Skills, Narrative, Self-Assessment, Positive Rewards, Time Control.

## **PALABRAS CLAVE**

Competencias Básicas, Autonomía, Responsabilidad, Socialización, Inteligencia Emocional, Habilidades de pensamiento, Narrativización, Auto-evaluación, Refuerzos Positivos, Control del tiempo.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

In Early Years Education, working with the Basic Competences, particularly on the autonomy, responsibility and socializing, is quite difficult especially for an inexperienced newcomer teacher aware of her constraints but willing to overcome them. However, this topic is highly relevant as they have to be individuals in a society. The children's attendance to the school at those early ages means their first contact to the society. It is their first situation with other people, a part of the family, of their age. They need to learn how to share things, how to be responsible, how to respect the others, how to be autonomous, etc. In short: to learn how to be and live in society.

The present academic work is developed from the experiences in that area of a student who is finishing the “Grade on Early Years Education - Mention on Foreign Languages: English” on her second Internship Period. During that period, she was lucky to work on the Basic Competences with the children as it is considered highly relevant by the Spanish Curricula in the young children education development. She focused on four of the Basic Competences:

Autonomy and personal initiative. It consists in the self-knowledge, which builds the child through his/her interaction with the environment, with his/her equals and with the adults; and in the child's capacity of own initiative acting.

Linguistic communication competence. It is related to the development and appropriate use of the basic language skills: to hear, to talk, to read, and to write.

Social and civic competence. It consists in the progressive development of the social abilities necessary to have balanced and satisfying relationships with the others. For that purpose it is necessary to embrace the behaviour social patterns that regulate the coexistence, and to adjust the behaviour to the patterns.

Learning to learn competence. Its acquisition means an improvement on the autonomy learning capacity as it allows to rely on previous learning and experiences in order to use the new knowledge and skills in different contexts.

Young children need to be lovingly and efficiently guided on their way to acquire autonomy, responsibility and socializing, and that is the difficult but rewarding teacher

job: to provide children appropriate resources, an appropriate language and an appropriate environment. All of this would help them also to improve their “learning to learn” competence, even more thoroughly if two different languages (Spanish and English) are equally used on the process.

Developing the work with Basic Competences in Early Years requires a classroom organization, on this occasion already settled in detail by the current teacher of the school, and the design and implementation of suitable mediators. The newcomer teacher used some already designed materials<sup>1</sup> adapting them to the specific children’s features and needs.

As the student has followed the “Mention on Foreign Languages: English” on her last academic year, this research attempts to reflect all the competences acquired throughout the whole degree, not only the ones that any infant teacher should reach, but also the competences that a foreign language teacher should demonstrate.

Any teacher should “to know” (have intellectual knowledge), “to know how to do” and “to know how to be”. In this work should be noticed within the common competencies for all teachers (“Libro Blanco de Magisterio”), and more specifically in the area of “to know how to do”, the capacity of promoting the autonomy learning in the pupils according to the objectives and contents of the educative level. Related to the skills an Infant teacher should “know”: know how to promote the children’s incorporation to the foreign language functional learning, as well as also to be aware international experiences<sup>2</sup> and innovative experimental patterns in Early Years Education. On the “to know how to do”, Infant teachers should know to assist initial habits of reading and writing approach, and manage the classroom organization. Among the main aims of the internship period, to which the students face with fear and willingness, is that future infant teachers participate as current “normal” teachers and learn to how to do, acting and reflecting from the practice with the goal of innovating and improving the teaching work, as well as acquire habits and skills to learn in autonomy and work on the same autonomy with the pupils.

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<sup>1</sup> Some mediators were chosen from a foreign teacher who had worked on these topics. She shares her experiences and resources used through videos uploaded in the Teaching Channel web page.

<sup>2</sup> To study the 3rd grade of the degree in Norway, a relevant foreign country regarding education, provides the personal experience of having seen and lived another teaching techniques to achieve the same competences demonstration, it opens the mind to try to set those learning on the educative Spanish reality.

Going deeper into the objectives of finishing the degree on the “Mention on Foreign Languages: English”, the foreign language teacher should achieve some skills as having fully communicative competence, linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge of the foreign language she/he is teaching; to be conscious of what he/she is going to teach and evaluate; select and develop educational strategies, varied activities and educative resources; and to guide progressively the general linguistic and communicative competences of the children through the integrated practice of the five skills (writing, reading, listening and understanding, speaking and interaction) on the foreign language classroom according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The CEFR is a document designed by the Council of Europe to define and describe six levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2) of foreign language proficiency. This is very useful in order to compare language exams of the different countries, not only in Europe, but in the whole world.

Finally, the teacher competences according to the Content Language Integrated Learning (from now on: CLIL). CLIL “refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focussed aims, namely the learning of content, and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language” (Marsh, 2002)<sup>3</sup>. Within CLIL context, teachers should identify the type of CLIL best suited to one’s context; contextualize CLIL teaching in regard to the school curriculum; link programme parameters and the needs of a particular class of students adapting language, content and learning skills outcomes; design and apply evaluation and assessment tools and select learning materials adapting them as needed; use appropriate subject-specific terminology and syntactic structures; use target scaffolding language in group, time, classroom noise, instructions, interaction, co-operative work management; use own oral language production as a tool for teaching through varying speech registers, cadence, and pitch.

On the following pages all the mentioned competences are intended to combine through different resources designed to implement on the Internship Period. All the process has a special background since the school was not a regular government or private one with a Bilingual CLIL Program to follow, it was a school where the British Council and the

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<sup>3</sup> Marsh, D. (2002). *Content and Language Integrated Learning: The European Dimension – Actions, Trends and Foresight Potential*.



“Ministerio de Educación” have an agreement, becoming in a British School which works with an interesting and complete Integrated curriculum that combines the British and the Spanish Infants Curricula, providing the newcomer teachers, or teachers in their training period, clear working guidelines with specific examples (including thinking skills which are carefully planned as standard routine through the basic competences, and suggestions on how to introduce songs, books, poems, videos, etc.), according to the different skills (literacy, numeracy, social, and knowledge and understanding of the world) and its targets in specific educational situations such as the lessons taught in English. The targets mentioned are more specific and smaller than the general objectives and do not mean the same as the outcomes (actions that would demonstrate the targets achieved), challenges (something difficult for the children that they have to reach), goals (something that children would have to do right in the future), etc. The Integrated Curriculum specifies each of them in its guidelines reflecting a different organization compared to the one of the Spanish Curriculum.

The language sets up the mind of people, defines the thinking capacity (Freud, Vygostky) through words, sentences and texts. For this reason the teacher has a very important and relevant role as she/he is the person who provides children with specific words and routine sentences. Through the repetition of the language, children assimilate the words and incorporate those words as theirs. Then is not only through the voice, those words, sentences and texts could also be seen and read by children in different displays. The displays become another assimilation way of the vocabulary and expressions.

The young teacher, feeling her job responsibility, considers that the teachers involved in the bilingual education, including herself, should make an effort documenting and improving themselves reading others sources such as the relevant webs belonged to the main foreign English speaker countries Educational Governments (Scotland - Curriculum for Excellence-, USA -Common Core-, Ireland -Northern Ireland Curriculum-,...) to increase all the information and knowledge they have.

Due to the special bilingual mentioned characteristic the tender children (3 to 5 years) that attempt to this type of school receive six hours per week of lessons in English, five of them are “English lessons” and the last hour corresponds with Arts, where children make manual arts being the instructions given to them in English.

All schools that join the special Bilingual Program in collaboration with the British Council according to the agreement must belong to the State. Additionally, the schools usually are located in middle/lower-class neighbourhood. The pupils of the school enjoy the opportunity that it offers: two languages coexistence in the same environment. These features are highly valued by many families that are aware of the bilingual needs at the present time.

Having acquired a notable standing due to the Bilingual British Programme, the school receives children from all city. Therefore, the pupil's families have to face some problems helping their children to do their homework in English. This situation encourages them to find different solutions, which helps to the improvement of the school.

The bilingualism, according to Cenoz, J. and Genesee, F, consists in the second language acquisition, in being a fully proficient speaker who has specific configurations of linguistic competences that reflect, in part, unique interactions of the languages he knows. In this way, people who are bilingual “have developed communicative competencies in two languages according to the specific contexts in which they learn to use them” (Cenoz and Genesee, 1998, p.18)<sup>4</sup>. In addition, being bilingual seems to increase positively the cognitive development, making also easier the acquisition of a third or more languages (multilingualism).

In the past, learning a second language was restricted to those people who had a higher social status; therefore they could access schools which offered that opportunity. In the same way, being bilingual or multilingual pointed as high class belonging. Nowadays, that thought has changed. Most of the people in the world understand the importance and the need of knowing more than one language in order to participate and compete in the today's world. The schools have been adapted to that consciousness offering second language lessons from early years of school attendance. The knowledge of different foreign languages is actually a target that most people try to reach nowadays.

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<sup>4</sup> Cenoz, J., & Genesee, F. (Eds.). (1998). *Beyond bilingualism: Multilingualism and multilingual education*. Multilingual Matters.

Bilingual education uses the second language as a way of teaching the same parameters that would be taught on the regular language, allowing kids who receive this kind of education not only to learn the same knowledge as the rest, but also to acquire more communicative competences in both languages. Moreover, children who are bilingual tend to be “more sensitive and responsive to the needs of their interlocutors than monolingual children” (Cenoz and Genesee, 1998, p. 26)<sup>5</sup>, abilities that will help them in their social relationships as well as in their professional relationships in their future.

In addition, the school that has been earlier discussed luckily already follows an Emotional Intelligence Improvement Plan, which favours and supports the present work development. This plan focuses on the importance of the emotional intelligence teaching (Gardner, Goleman), which proves that even being in a bilingual context this investigation goes further of teaching English to early years children. The learning of a foreign language encourages children to think differently and the thinking development allows them to experience a wider range of feelings.

This research is not the only existing one, there have been many investigations around the world working on bilingualism in CLIL contexts regarding fields such as research and academic studies, scientific reflection and action research. And definitely there will be many more in the future as the languages learning will continue being relevant to live in an interrelated world. The young teacher hopes that her project, small but carried out with enthusiasm and excitement, may be of some help to other teachers in the future. Certainly it has given to the newcomer teacher who writes this “Trabajo de Fin de Grado” (from now on: TFG) the great opportunity of increasing her learning, going deeper into the topic (the basic competences –autonomy, responsibility, sociability-), and implementing her knowledge. It has been a meaningful challenge for her as she has had to strive trying to accomplish “the excellence” as an Infant Teacher demonstrating her “know”, “know how to do” and “know how to be”.

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<sup>5</sup> Cenoz, J., & Genesee, F. (Eds.). (1998). *Beyond bilingualism: Multilingualism and multilingual education*. Multilingual Matters.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The Spanish Curriculum<sup>6</sup> establishes seven main objectives to reach in Early Years Education. However, below are listed the ones which are related to and intended to achieve in this “TFG” by the newcomer teacher working with some of the Basic Competences with the children.

- To acquire autonomy on the usual activities progressively.
- To develop the emotional skills.
- To be in contact with the people and to acquire basic coexistence and social relations patterns progressively, as well as to exercise in the peaceful conflict resolution.
- To develop communicative skills in different languages and expression ways.

This work seeks to develop in children their autonomy and responsibility in classroom routines but also in their lives as individuals, which is related with the work on their relationships within themselves and also with their classmates (friends, people). Relations with people mean to live in society following the culture patterns, in this case with two cultures as background (Spanish and English).

The newcomer teacher, with the above objectives in mind and the main goal of getting the children to be autonomous, responsible and sociable, implemented some mediators which had, each of them, specific targets.

### 2.1. SPECIFIC TARGETS (for the children):

Related to the **first general objective** (To acquire autonomy on the usual activities progressively.) the newcomer teacher established some targets to achieve through the resources implementation.

- To follow the classroom rules.

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<sup>6</sup> Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia (2006). *Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación*. Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, Madrid.

- To self-assess.
- To solve problems.
- To think and learn how to think.
- To be organized.

In addition, bearing in mind that on one hand time is for children a concept elusive and indeterminate, and on the other hand learning to understand and control time will allow children to improve their autonomy, the following targets related to time have also been included:

- To become aware of the time concept.
- To take control of their own time.
- To sequence moments, events, numbers, words or routines
- To predict what would happen next.

Related to the **second general objective** (To develop the emotional skills.) the newcomer teacher established some targets to achieve through the resources implementation.

- To be aware of the different emotions that can be felt.
- To be aware of self-emotions.
- To control the self-emotions.
- To be aware of the other's emotions.
- To change moods to be happier.

Related with the **third general objective** (To be in contact with the people and to acquire basic coexistence and social relations patterns progressively, as well as to get exercise on the peaceful conflict resolution.) the newcomer teacher established some targets to achieve through the resources implementation.

- To speak positively.
- To realize their misbehaviours.
- To be responsible for their actions.

- To be social. / To live in society.

Related with the **fourth general objective** (To develop communicative skills in different languages and expression ways.) the newcomer teacher established some targets to achieve through the resources implementation.

- To read not only words but images too.
- To narrate moments, events, routines,... through languages (images, words,...)

### 3. JUSTIFICATION

The last year of the studies to become an early year's teacher, every student needs to spend three months in a real school within a real classroom learning from an infant teacher in order to develop all the preparation the university has been providing to those young teachers during four years and to prove that they have acquired the skills of their degree<sup>7</sup>.

The present work is focused on one Training Teacher achievements along her Internship Period regarding her efforts on promoting the children autonomy, social abilities, recognition of their own achievements, new and varied ways of thinking, and bilingual competences. She also worried about observing carefully the children's needs and she seeks to satisfy them through her actions and resources.

Children, little human beings who had only lived for few years, to get to be autonomous have to learn how to do many and varied things. Therefore, they need to begin to acquire criteria. Having those criteria they will be able to give judgements and, thereby, to identify their learning. They need to develop the "learning to learn" competence.

It is on the just mentioned task where the teacher, on this occasion the young teacher in her training period, gets involved. She had the responsibility of providing the children specific targets, specific times and assistance (for example varied and appropriated

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<sup>7</sup> The skills and competences of an Early Years Teacher are detailed in the introduction of this research.

tools) to achieve them, and of course criteria, so that children could know in which level they are considering the organized set of criteria settled to achieve the goals.

Those criteria should be given by the teacher in a simply, affirmative and confidently way. Here becomes relevant the language importance in the statements understanding and assimilation by the children. In the same way, along the time provided to the targets accomplishment, the teacher should also ask questions which would remember and define the criteria to the kids.

Once the children learn to place themselves within the settled criteria, they can develop the ability of understanding and identifying themselves in relation to the settled criteria (their self-assessment) which reflect their targets achievement and makes them autonomous in their learning.

In addition, the judgment ability that the children should acquire shall be used by them in other environments out of the educative one, as could be the social or the personal environments.

Next, the educative environment where the student made her Internship Period and developed the goals and targets mentioned is described.

### **3.1. SCHOOL CONTEXT**

The school where the Internship took place was a state school of Infant and Primary Education in the capital, located in a working-class neighbourhood. However, the school receives children from all parts of the city mainly due to the following special feature.

For many years this school works in collaboration with the British Council, following a Bilingual Programme which integrates in an “Integrated Curriculum” both curricula: the Spanish and the British, being the way of teaching marked by this special characteristic. It actually improves the development of the linguistic communication competence in two ways (Spanish and English). In addition to that relevant programme the school, among many others, also follows an Emotional Intelligence Improvement Plan since

Early Years, which meant a convenient support to work on the social and civic competence, one of the subjects of this work.

The teachers (both, the English ones and the Spanish ones) adopt an specific planning pattern to facilitate the work with the Integrated Curriculum that consist in following a plurilingual perspective planning literacy at text, sentence and word level. This means to work on the three levels in English as well as in Spanish since early year children, as the Integrated Curriculum recommends.



Picture 1: Literacy progression planning.

In the same way the teachers have to be in agreement on the language premises such as use on their teaching phonic reading in English and in Spanish or follow a Reading Plan which includes books or texts in both languages.

Besides, the school uses its own building as a special and general perspective to promote the Basic Competences development in its pupils (besides of the work develop inside the classrooms) following common programs focused on socializing. The Infant Education corridor represents a clear evidence of that purpose. It is fully “decorated” with educative displays and murals made jointly by some of the classrooms on the long walls; and also several individual works of the children are displayed in order to all the children could see them every time they walk along the corridor.



Picture 2: Infant Education corridor.



Picture 3: Children making a mural.



The corridor is also use as a common place for the children of different classrooms to carry out activities together in some occasions.



Picture 4: Children carrying out an activity together.

The Infant Education corridor have six classrooms, two for each level: “first” (three year old children), “second” (four year old children) and “third” (five year old children).

### **3.2. CLASSROOM CONTEXT**

The cosy classroom of the mentioned school where the newcomer teacher did her internship period is located on the first floor of the building, in the Infant Education corridor. It belongs to the “second” level of Early Years. Inside the classroom many differentiated spaces can be found, each one with its appropriate furniture, materials and displays to carry out its functionality. Those which have been modified to implement these “TFG” resources are detailed below:

Meeting area: It is a very special place in Early Years Education. It is composed of a soft carpet for the children to sit down, two corkboards with many useful English and Spanish displays on them, a whiteboard for writing and stick other displays, and another whiteboard, in this case used as a plain mural to fill with different picture topics.

The current teacher kindly allowed implementing on the meeting area two resources: one which works on behaviour through rules control-award and other which works on time control concept. The first one was placed below the second whiteboard within easy reach for the children. The second resource was located above the second whiteboard so that pupils could see comfortably the timetable at any time just looking there.



Picture 5: Meeting area (mediators implemented pointed).

Blackboard area: It consists of a big blackboard and above it there were some displays where the alphabet, numbers and vocal letters can be easily read. It is used to explain the worksheets which are proposed by the text books or others designed by the teacher, to explain other kind of activities, and to ask the children to come up and write letters, numbers, draw geometric figures, etc. in order to test their knowledge and help them to improve; and also for the teacher to write the date.

The current teacher once again allows using the blackboard area to implement the last resource which worked on emotions recognition. The mediator was placed at the bottom of the board, so that it was in sight and in an easy place to reach for the children's hands.



Picture 6: Blackboard area (mediator implemented pointed).

### **3.3. PUPILS CONTEXT**

The classroom was formed by twenty-five four (some already five) year old lovely children; nine girls and sixteen boys. This special difference influenced on their regular behaviour. It is true that most of girls are less fidgety and talkative than boys, with exceptions, of course. Actually some of the boys were the ones who incited to think on what to do to control them.

One of the main problems any Early Teacher faces is classroom control, mainly when it is the first year as a teacher or along the internship period. Some misbehaviours were observed in the group followed. Apparently some children did not react to any kind of teacher actions, they would look away from the teacher's eyes or look back testing the adult. Facing the reality, the young teacher realized how much these kind of actions of the kids would disturb the day to day learning of the classroom.

The first resource arise from that situation, from the need of finding and thinking on something which makes these children react and change their behaviours at the same time that they learn to assess themselves being responsible without depending on the adult. After thinking of the situation, the newcomer teacher found a possible way to be implemented. It was important and useful for all pupils in the classroom: to work with and through their emotions making them to be aware of the classroom rules, necessities living in a society, and respecting them. They would get a final reward if they do so, which also would touch their emotions. In short, making the children responsible of their actions and controlling their emotions becoming social individuals, recognizing in addition their own achievements.

Linking to the above objectives, it seemed appropriate to continue working with different thinking skills implementing a resource to work on another important aspect in early ages: to acquire the time concept and learn how to control it, due to the fact that along the internship period was noticed that some children asked the teacher what they would do next or if such day, for example, they would have music lesson. They needed a way to know by their selves to answer those questions. Thereby, children would improve on their autonomy, linguistic communication and "learning to learn" competences.

## 4. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Many theories have been taken into account along the process of the design, implementation and writing of this “TFG”. These theories are going to be detailed below. It is interesting to highlight that this work conclusions support most of the authors’ way of thinking. However, with some other authors the work disagrees.

### 4.1. THINKING SKILLS

In other countries such as USA and United Kingdom to teach and learn different **thinking skills** is already part of their base curricula. In the British Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage is included “creating and thinking critically” as a main characteristic of the affective learning, in order to achieve that “children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things” (British Statutory Framework for the EYFS, 2012, p. 7)<sup>8</sup>.

Thinking is a relevant action that everyone does without stopping during all their lives as it is impossible not to think. There are many types of thinking such as to imagine, interpret, deduce, criticize, analyze, etc. and all of those abilities can be learnt, developed and improved in order to reach different aims. In this task is the teacher the one who can play an important role.

According to Puchta and Williams (2011):

Children need to be challenged, they are capable of a high level of thinking if encouraged to do so. To face the unpredictable world they will need to develop a range of problem-solving and decision-making skills that enable them to assess

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<sup>8</sup> Department for Education. (2012). *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: Setting the Standards for Learning, Development and Care for Children from Birth to Five*. Department for Education.

new information, understand unexpected problems, and find appropriate ways of tackling such situations and of evaluating their success. (p. 6-7)<sup>9</sup>

To teach young children some of the different thinking skills, are necessities specific and appropriate tools which help kids to touch, see, and read the facts; or to show by themselves what their thoughts are without talking at the first place. These actions would help them to organize their minds.

With this purpose the teacher has to design the resources that would fit best with his/her group of children. Then, to leave some minutes to children think and reason about what are they doing, is really important. Furthermore, the teacher should also concentrate efforts on developing the habit of thinking in his/her pupils. She/he needs to build several routines on the day to day, including the habit of thinking in order to get children able to face situations that seemed too complicated solving problems.

For children, to overcome problems makes them to feel more confident with themselves, a feeling joined to the happiness. To be confident and happy are not the only emotions that any human being can feel, actually, there is a wide range of feelings that the teacher should also guide the children to handle it.

## **4.2. MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES (EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE)**

Working with the emotions on children helps them to “learn how to control their emotions, how to positively resolve conflicts and take responsible decisions” (U King Im, 2013)<sup>10</sup>. It has been proved by several researches that promoting the work on emotional intelligence and enabling kids the social and emotional learning, the violence and aggressions between them decrease, providing a better learning environment in the classrooms and a direct positive influence on their growing and finally in their future adulthood.

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<sup>9</sup> Puchta, H., & Williams, M. (2011). *Teaching Young Learners to Think. ELT-Activities for young learners aged 6-12*. Helblink Languages.

<sup>10</sup> U King Im, N. (2013). *Importance of Emotional Intelligence since early childhood* [Lemauricen.com - Article].

The first developer of the theory that leads to work with emotions was Howard **Gardner** (1983) as he was the first one on being determinate on the existence of Multiple Intelligences, among them, the Emotional Intelligence. He emphasised on the development on the intrapersonal and intrapersonal intelligences standing up both as necessities to handle living in a society.

Intrapersonal intelligence: “entails the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one’s feelings, fears and motivations” (Gardner, 1993, p. 150)<sup>11</sup>. According to Gardner’s view “it involves having an effective working model of ourselves, and to be able to use such information to regulate our lives” (Gardner, 1993, p. 150).

Interpersonal intelligence: “is concerned with the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people. It allows people to work effectively with others” (Gardner, 1993, p. 150).

Having into account all of it, it can be said that “Emotional Intelligences, if instilled at an early stage, can positively affect the development of the children transforming them into better persons, showing respect for others’ opinions and practising positive interaction” (U King Im, 2013)<sup>12</sup>.

Few years later another psychologist, Daniel **Goleman** (1995), insisted on the issue again, believing that:

Schools should teach emotional literacy along with regular academic subjects and that social and emotional learning not only improves children’s social and emotional abilities, but also lowers risks like violence, [...], while making kids better behaved and more positive about learning. (Autobiography)<sup>13</sup>

Being positive is always beneficial whatever the subject is about: about learning -as Goleman said-, about setbacks of life, about relationships, about one-self, etc., including about the language used to communicate with the others. This is especially important when is a teacher who uses the language to teach his/her pupils.

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<sup>11</sup> Gardner, H. (1993). *Multiple intelligences: The theory in practice*. Basic books.

<sup>12</sup> U King Im, N. (2013). *Importance of Emotional Intelligence since early childhood* [Lemaucicen.com - Article].

<sup>13</sup> Goleman, D. (2014). *About Daniel Goleman. On his own words*. [danielgoleman.info/biography].

### 4.3. LANGUAGE THEORIES

Any language used by the teacher related to the resource goals (to develop the Basic Competences -autonomy, responsibility, sociability, learning to learn-), should be given in a positive way, which mean always talk to them with positive sentences and words. The language is extremely important. The mind always transforms the negative words or sentences into positive ones in order to “tell” the body how to act, so that the teacher saves children that effort talking positively, allowing them to easily integrate the messages.

Referring to the language is necessary to discuss Lev **Vygotsky** (1934), a relevant author in the Cognitive Approach and, particularly, in the Social Development Theory. To Vygotsky, language is a social concept which is developed through social interactions. Language acquisition is determined by the vocabulary to which each child is exposed in his/her social environment and by the joint development between thought and language. Thereby, his theory emphasises the importance of communicating with others, which stimulates the growth of thought.

According to Vygotsky’s mind,

Language is not merely an expression of the knowledge the child has acquired. There is a fundamental correspondence between thought and speech in terms of one providing resource to the other; language becoming essential in forming thought and determining personality features. (Schütz, 2014)<sup>14</sup>

From that point, “verbal thought” and “rational language” are created and, of course, interrelated.

On the contrary, Piaget’s theory differs with Vygotsky’s thinking. Piaget thinks that the language’s base is the thought and the language growth depends on the cognitive development.

Those are not the only thoughts of Piaget, there is other theory of his which is also related to the main goal of the present work, on this occasion, to the responsibility and civic and social competences.

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<sup>14</sup> Schütz, R. (2014). *Vygotsky & Language Acquisition*. English made in Brazil. [Article]

#### 4.4. RESPONSIBILITY AND MORALITY THEORIES

Referring to Jean **Piaget** (1932) the whole present work disagrees with his ideas. This research relies all the responsibility on children, proving that they are able of managing their own behaviours, emotions, problems, self-assess and control the time. Piaget faced all of it through his Theory of Moral Development. He thinks “moral development involves children learning how to tell the difference between right and wrong” (Oswalt, 2010, p.18)<sup>15</sup>. Anyways, the morality is conditioned by many factors in any person and especially in children. They, according to Piaget, are influenced by their families, other adults, and their own experiences in cognitive, emotional and social skills. However, the adults in general are the ones who set the rules and the consciousness of what is wrong and what is right. “Children accept that authority figures have godlike powers, and are able to make rules that last forever, do not change, and must be followed” (Oswalt, 2010, p.18). They just know that if those rules are broken, they would suffer the consequences with punishments.

“Piaget recognized that cognitive development is closely tied to moral development and was particularly interested in the way children's thoughts about morality changed over time” (Oswalt, 2005)<sup>16</sup>. Piaget, on his pre-operational stage of cognitive development, which involves children among two and seven years, does not reflect them as able of distinguishing “appropriate-inappropriate”, they just accept what the adults (parents, teachers,...) said.

From his view when children are above ten years the time of divesting the moral authority comes, not before, in the same way most of the times is not what a single person thinks, but the society. However in this work is proved that children who are four or five years are perfectly able to recognize their behaviours as “good” or “bad”, and also other’s (their classmates).

Jean Piaget was not the only author whose theory is broken by this “TFG”, there are also others like Lawrence **Kohlberg** (1958) through his “Stages of Moral Development”, an adaptation of Piaget’s. The theory defends three development levels, with two stages in each one, for moral reasoning following a progress on the ethical

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<sup>15</sup> Oswalt, A. (2010). *Child Development Theory: Middle Childhood*. [Article. Mentalhelp.net]

<sup>16</sup> Oswalt, A. (2005). *Piaget’s Theory of Moral Development*. [Article. Sevenscountries.org]



behaviour step by step. He went deeper on the Piaget's work and the scale of Kohlberg is focused on behaviours justification. To highlight the fact that his stages begin with the children who are nine, which is already far from the children's ages on which this work is focused.

Kohlberg, on his pre-conventional level claims that morality consists on obey rules set by the adults defining a moral law, and also on avoiding negative consequences, the same as Piaget said. Kohlberg adds as a further step that later, what is considered as good and moral by children is what covers their needs. Moreover, according to his mind, until the adulthood people do not understand that each person could believe differently about morality. He also thinks that those beliefs have influenced the rules and laws of the culture to which that person belongs.

On the contrary, Carol **Gilligan** (1982) stands up against Piaget and Kohlberg's mind through her "A Different Voice Theory", which also reflects that there are no differences between girls and boys in the development of consciousness of morality, women not only think about care, they can equally think about justice as men, and vice versa. According to Gilligan "morality is founded in a sense of concrete connection and direct response between persons, a direct sense of connection which exists prior to moral beliefs about what is right or wrong or which principles to accept" (Blum, 2009, p.476)<sup>17</sup>. All people without attempt to the gender, follows stages of morality since early childhood and, of course, it is developed along the growth. Gilligan therefore thinks that the autonomy is gained over time if it is worked on.

Continuing with the responsibility matter on children should be mentioned Maria **Montessori** (1912). She instils the self-education in early years, to provide them a calculated freedom environment which entails to face the first and basic problems of their age in order to become a better adult in the future, ready to deal with life. With "calculate" she means to give young children the appropriate games and materials, which encourage them to develop comfortably their autonomy and independence, allowing them being curious and discover their own knowledge. That objective is what this research also seeks through the design of some materials.

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<sup>17</sup> Blum, L. A. (1988). *Gilligan and Kohlberg: Implications for moral theory*. Ethics, 472-491.

Even being autonomous and independent people always search the contact with the others, to share their personal experiences or their future plans, to discuss about a topic or simply to be in company. On all those assumptions it is absolutely necessary the use of a kind of language in a narrative way.

#### **4.5. NARRATIVE THEORY**

Finally, it is necessary in this research to name Jerome **Bruner** (1985), a relevant psychologist who promotes the cognitive psychology. In addition, he developed the differences between two ways of possible thinking: the narrative thinking and logical-scientific thinking. Combining both our world is organized and that is the reason why Bruner insisted on teaching both in schools, not just focus on the rational thinking but also on the narrative skills, through which people are able to express themselves and even help them on the understanding and explaining of the logical science. It was thanks to the narrative thinking that history is known, without it, according to Bruner, probably the other way of thinking had not be transmitted. Telling stories is what makes up a life because if the facts are not told to others and even to one-self is like they never existed or happened. It is therefore important to instil and help to develop this type of thought and expression in children because since someone starts talking, he/she starts telling stories.

According to his Theory of Representation (1966), there are three levels in the way of expression, starting with “enactive” (based on movements), following with “iconic” (based on images) and ending with “symbolic” (based on words and other symbols). These stages, which are accumulative, are also valid to teach better to children. On the present work is relevant to reflect that to Bruner’s view, children who are between one and six years belong to the “iconic level”.

This research is based on Bruner’s ideas; one of the resources created (the “resource three” which will be detailed later on) encourages precisely children to narrate their day to day, reading the images, words and symbols of the mediator and making sentences using words as “and then”, “like yesterday”, “before”,... to construct, build and form a story.

## **5. METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

Once the general and specific targets were settled; the background or context of the Internship Period detailed; the theories related and the necessities to work on the children development in their way to be conscious, autonomous, responsible, sociable, and civic people, described; it was the time to set the main features the mediators the newcomer teacher wanted to use, should have. In addition, she had to think about the more appropriate methodology to implement the mediators.

### **5.1. METHODOLOGY**

Regarding the methodology used by the newcomer teacher in her detailed search and adaptation of mediators, and her actions as teacher with the children, she realized of the importance of the self-assessment in the development of the "learning to learn" competence on the pupils. She also considered as an appropriate and affective philosophy the positive rewards which she would use on one of the resources implementation.

#### **ASSESSMENT AND SELF-ASSESSMENT**

One of the implemented resources works with the pupil's self-assessment, being the assessment an acknowledgement of learning. It supports the children independent learning giving them specific expectations, setting the criteria to evaluate "and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches those expectations and standards, and using the resulting information to document, explain, and improve performance" (Angelo, 1995, p. 7-9)<sup>18</sup>. The assessment is actually related to the intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences as the results affect the self-esteem and, consequently the social esteem. For working on the assessment aim, exists many resources focus on all educative levels designed by experts on the assessment topic; the goal for a teacher is to develop or adapt the best resource suited and appropriated to his or her group of children. The self-assessment is included on the classroom routines in

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<sup>18</sup> Angelo, T. (1995) *Reassessing -and Defining- Assessment*. AAHE Bulletin.

order to teach and help the children to be conscious and autonomous. Besides, on this research the self-assessment has been used by the newcomer teacher to get a better control of the emotions and behaviours in the pupils group.

## **POSITIVE REWARDS**

Being positive is always the best way to encourage children to do anything. Through the positivism the adult proves that he/she trusts on the kids, giving them the courage to keep improving. When it comes to a specific target that the teacher seeks to be accomplished by his/her children, to give them a positive reward if they had achieved the goal, instead of punish them if they don't, will be much efficient. This makes the children happier as they continue believing that they can improve and not going back on their improvements.

The aim that from then on children have got (obtaining the positive reward again) will keep them fulfilling the teacher's goals. The situation will be comfortable for the children and it will be beneficial for both, pupils and teacher. Besides, kids will be more confident of themselves, knowing that they can obtain the reward and overcome the targets.

The role of the adult consists on being supportive and to recognize his/her pupil's achievements not just only through words and love, but also through a touching thing as it is the positive reward. After a while, children themselves would ask for their prize if they were certain of having done the things well and correctly.

## **SCAFFOLDING SYSTEM**

Following with the process, it was the moment to define a stepped plan of approaching to the new resources. It is necessary to take into account that trying to reach all at once should be avoided due to the fact that the children would not assimilate any of them properly. Thereby, every time a new resource or methodology is going to be implemented, is absolutely necessary to create a scaffolding system.

Three were the resources designed to get the goals, each one with its functional characteristics to reach the purposes. All of them were implemented in the classroom following steps, as other educational institutions like the Northern Ireland Curriculum “Creating a Thinking Classroom” in order to achieve a goal: to introduce a new routine.

Steps:

1. Introduction. On the chosen day to implement one mediator, the first thing done was to talk a little bit about the topic of the resource.
2. Presentation. The mediator was showed to the children asking them what they think it was, letting them read the words and even complementing the mediator personalizing it with their names or their picture, depending on the resource presented.
3. Explanation. Once the children have seen the resource is time to tell them why is going to be used by them and what are the targets in a way they all can easily understand. That is to say: where is going to be placed in the classroom, how it works, what they need to do with it, what will happen if they use it correctly.
4. Promotion. The positivism and confidence of the teacher on the pupils should be share. The teacher should encourage them letting them know that she believes they are perfectly able to use appropriately the resource and, in case there is an award to get, that all of them can get it.
5. Contact. When the teacher has confirmed that all of the children have understood by the children’s spoken words, they can have the first contact with the resource. Depending on the mediator, orderly, the kids will actually touch it to put the resource on working.

Once the first contact has passed the mediator needs to become a routine. The teacher role in achieving this part is very important. The next steps will be crucial:

6. Observation and reminder. Just from the moment the resource has been presented to the children the teacher has to be aware of: first if they remember that it exists and if not, remind it to the kids; second how they use the mediator and take notes of their individual reactions. In case that the teacher actions were needed to develop the functionality of the resource, she has to play her role in it.

7. Observation. Further and continue observation children's relations with the mediator. It is still relevant to take notes.
8. Changes. The developing of the mediator could "ask for" modifications in order to accomplish its task even better. Another reason for changing some items of the resource for example could be the improvements of the children in some behaviours. Those changes need to be explained to the children at the time of its implementation.
9. Observation. The changes actually could change the reactions of the kids. In order not to miss anyone of them, the teacher needs again to watch and take notes.
10. (Steps 7 and 8 could be repeated several times until the functionality of the mediators would be as perfect as it could.)
11. Conclusions. After a period of time it is advisable to look back and compare the situation before the implementation of the resource and be aware of the situation until that point and reflect if the mediator is accomplishing its purposes. Besides, it could be the perfect time to take decisions about the mediator's future, if it is going to continue being a routine or, on the contrary, it should not longer be used.
12. Sharing and feedback. As a final step on the implementation of a resource the teacher should share with the children her/his impressions in an easy way. In the same way, to ask them how they feel about the resource after the period they have been using it in order to take their opinions into account. Finally, this moment would be the time to communicate the decisions taken to the pupils.

## **5.2. DESIGN**

After having documenting herself about different and relevant theories, as it is the due step in every research, the newcomer teacher resolved that to develop in the children the autonomy, the social and civic competence, the responsibility, the "learning to learn", etc. -all of it using equally two languages-, she needed to implement some resources which help both, the children and herself as a teacher, to accomplish all the objectives.

For that reason, along the internship period, different resources were developed with a great enthusiasm. First analysed, later adapted and finally tested. In the resources building the young teacher had a special care that the three of them would answer correctly to its functionality. In the same way, all the resources were laminated in order to prevent the handling to spoil them.

It is true that every ordinary kid is perfectly able to be responsible, think in different ways, be kind and a good friend with their classmates, be polite and have good manners without interrupting the lessons; they just need to work on it supporting themselves in a strong guide: the teacher and the suitable mediators. This was what the newcomer teacher tried to represent for the children supplying them also with the chosen and adapted materials.

#### **RESOURCE ONE: WORKING ON AUTONOMY, BEHAVIOUR, RESPONSIBILITY, SELF-ASSESSMENT AND CIVILITY.**

The mediator consists in a poster grid, a double-entry chart. In the first line are written all the names of the pupils in lower case letters so that they can continue working in their reading learning of this type of writing. On the following lines at the top there is one rule per line. On the rest of the resulting boxes are placed five smiling stars. The rules selected to use on the behaviour mediator were chosen considering that the classroom already had a rules poster which could be seen by the pupils making them easier to understand that those rules on the wall had to be followed. (Annex 1).

This poster grid presents a new kind of text. At first it might be considered as difficult to be read by the children but if it were well explained, children would be able to read it and understand it.

As a complement, the resource includes medals with the names of all the children written on them. At the end of the weeks, the children obtained their medals if they conserved all their stars as positive reward.



Picture 7: Resource One Chart



Picture 8: Resource One Positive Reward

The resource was used when the teacher observed some rule broken by a pupil. In that case, the adult should go to the poster mediator with the kid and speak with him/her briefly about the misbehaviour in order to he/she realizes that the action was not appropriate and, because of that, he/she has to take him/herself one of the smiling stars out of his/her own box in the corresponding rule. This action made them more conscious of their behaviour. Thereby next time the children would remember the rules more easily and would think twice before breaking one rule again. After a while were the children themselves the ones who had to do their own assessment.

Positive rewards influence on children as a confirmation of having done well something, whether homework or good actions. The mediator seeks to ensure that all students achieve their medals at the end of each week as a reward for their good compliance, and self-consciousness about it.

In the future, the target of the present resource would be continuing adding and replacing rules in order to all children succeed following all the rules of the initial poster rules, or others that the teacher considers necessary to work on them.

First contact of the children with the mediator:

At the presentation of this mediator to the children, they were excited at the time of placing their own names on the poster. They showed interest when the teacher asked



them to read the rules. But the highest moment was when they heard about the “surprise” they would get if they accomplished the goal.

Along the whole week the teacher acted following the steps mentioned. Children seemed to be sad understanding why they lost stars. Some of them expressed to the teacher that they were proud of themselves because they had not lost any star and they would get the surprise. Others also reacted telling to their classmates they had to take one star out when they had broken some of the rules.

At the end of the week the teacher generally spoke about the lost stars and encouraged them not to repeat those actions the following week. She also congratulated the ones who had achieved the targets and revealed the surprise: personal medals with their names written. Every kid was excited when they received their awards. The moment was supported by a background music that made the medal delivery more emotional and solemn. The music was selected by the teacher from “Children songs – música para niños instrumental” because it was a nice and lively song. Besides, it was sought an instrumental music without lyrics to avoid disturbing the reading of the names of the children who were to receive a medal.

The kids who had not got a medal became sad, one of them even started to cry. It was an incredible moment when another kid who had got the medal approached him and said: “Don’t cry, another week you will get one”, comforting him. In this action it could be appreciated that the adult action was not needed. It was the kid himself who acted comforting his classmate, showing his interpersonal intelligence.

The weeks passed and on Fridays some kids came to the teacher to tell her:”Today I will have the medal!” with a smile on his face. Others, at the time of the medals delivery, added happily one medal to the number of them that they already had. The ones which normally get the medal and suddenly that week do not, bowed their heads.

## **RESOURCE TWO: WORKING ON TIME CONTROL CONCEPT, AUTONOMY AND NARRATIVE.**

The first idea of this resource consists in few medium size images representing the children usually activities with its words in capitals and lower case letters below them

(Annex 2), a title “ROUTINES”, and an arrow to indicate the activity which was being developed at that time. The activities represented were:

- Asamblea (Meeting time)
- Trabajo individual / Ficha (Individual worksheet)
- Almuerzo (Snack)
- Recreo (Break)
- Relajación (Relaxation)
- English (English lesson)
- Psicomotricidad (Psychomotor activity)
- Plástica / Arts
- Informática (Computer lesson)
- Cuento (Story tale)
- Rincones (Workshops)
- Religión (Religion)
- Bits de inteligencia (Intelligence bits)

Once the mediator was built was considered interesting to add the specific times of every routine so that children could begin to familiarize with the reading and understanding of the concept of the clock. Small digital and analogue clocks were designed according to the classroom timetable (Annex 2). It was taken into account that not all the pupils would appreciate and understand the clocks, nevertheless it was considered appropriate to focus on the children who did. The teacher was aware that for those children, to have the opportunity of reading clocks would be beneficial for them. Furthermore, they will help their classmates who do not understand the clocks, to start realizing of the clock’s meaning.



Picture 9: Resource Two Timetable Display

Before the kids arrive to the school every day, the teacher had to place the cards on the correct order according to her teaching planning of that day and also to the classroom timetable. At the beginning the teacher, and later the pupil in charge each day, had to move the arrow from one routine to the following one when the time came.

As a previous activity to associate their own emotions to the different moments of the day, children had to be able to recognize the sequence of time and the time passing concept, which is actually a very difficult task for these early ages. Therefore the routine timetable was developed, which provided them the opportunity to read moments and times through images (Bruner, 1987)<sup>19</sup>, words, and later, numbers. In this way they could know what would happen next on that morning providing them a security at the same time they develop planning skills.

In the reading field, The Spanish/English Integrated Curriculum for the Infant Stage provides a “structured reading and writing activities”. It starts with the “Text level: sequence stories using picture and sentence cards”, which corresponds with the timetable cards; carrying on with the “Sentence level: match a sentence to the picture in the context of topic work and stories”, which corresponds with the variable planning depending on the day; and finishing with the “Word level: word and picture match”, which corresponds with the clock, a very concrete situation.

#### First contact of the children with the mediator:

All of the children quickly understood the utility of those images and words. The first days of implementation, as it was the teacher the one who changed the arrow, the kids just paid attention and get closer to see better what they were to do that day. Some of them “read” the timetable following the sequence narrating using words as “then”, “later”, “when”, “finally”.

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<sup>19</sup> Bruner explains the capacity of children to narrate their lives, according to tokens of time and events, so that their experiences acquire meaning.

When the kids themselves were responsible for the arrow and the time, each other reminded to move the arrow in case one of them had forgotten. There was no a day without the children watched to the resource looking for answers.

### **RESOURCE THREE: WORKING ON EMOTIONS, SOCIABILITY AND SELF-RECOGNITION.**

The last, but not least important, resource consists in some wooden sticks and the same number of plastic jars where the most important emotions faces are stuck: happy/feliz, sad/triste, angry/enfadado, bored/aburrido (Annex 3). These four had been selected because the children almost already knew the words in English and in Spanish and basically what they mean. In addition, the mentioned four emotions were varied enough and easy to be identified by the children. To complement the resource was necessary all the children individual pictures were stuck also on wooden sticks.



Picture 10: Resource Three Materials



Picture 11: Resource Three

Once all the pupils had understood, even given examples, what the emotions are and why they feel different emotions, they needed to take a time to think about it and place their picture on the plastic jar whose emotion face represented how they are feeling at that time. The teacher played a very important role talking to them about their emotions and helping them to think on what to do to feel better.

For example, she asked them: “are you sad?”, “why are you feeling sad?”, “do you want to be happy instead of sad?”, “what could you do to feel happy”?, “great!, can you do it? I think you can”, “ok, so do it! I’m sure you will be happy then!”.

And after a while...:"did you do it?", "are you happy now?", "great!, I knew you were able to do it! Now go and change your picture to the happy jar!"

The resource seeks to achieve that children recognize their own emotions and understand also another's feelings in order to start living as social individuals (Gardner, 1983)<sup>20</sup>.

The functionality of this resource in the future does not end when all the children have assimilated the four emotions and are able to identify their feelings regarding those emotions. On the contrary, there are many more different emotions that can be presented to the pupils so they can go deeper into their feelings and express themselves also through the new emotions (Annex 3).

#### First contact of the children with the mediator:

Kids gave situations examples of people feeling the different emotions and, with the teacher's help, tried to reason those feelings. Then, all the children were excited having their own picture available to express themselves. Most of them were able to show their emotions after thinking for a short period of time, for others to express their feelings took a bit longer. In the same way, some told the teacher immediately why they were feeling sad for example, and others preferred to keep the answer for a while before share it with the teacher.

## **6. RESULTS**

### **6.1. REGARDING THE RESOURCES AND THE TARGETS**

All new mediators used during the internship were found to be totally accepted by the children in the classroom. Nevertheless not all the children became familiar with them at the same time. Whereas some of the pupils keenly begun to make use of the resources

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<sup>20</sup> From Gardner's point of view, children should not only to be taught to achieve knowledge but also to live in a society.

since the first day of its implementations, it took a little bit longer to others. However the whole class managed to assimilate its functionality.

Was the resources design hard? Did it take much effort? Generally the three resources were not very hard to elaborate; however each of them meant a small challenge. The hardest were the “resource one” (working on autonomy, behaviour, responsibility, self-assessment and civility) and the “resource three” (working on emotions, sociability and self-recognition). That was due to the decisions that the young teacher had to take in order to find the best arrangement of the mediator parts, to make them functional to the specific children group to which the resources were directed to.

Of course any effort was pleasantly rewarded. It was touching to see the little faces of the children showing proud getting a medal, making reflexions about their emotions, telling aloud the routines of a day, and so on.

Related to the **resource one**, the newcomer teacher had to think on how many rules to use, which of them were the best to start with, how many stars each kid would have at the beginning. To begin were selected four rules (Annex 1), most of them easily to achieve by the children. This situation was thought with the goal of encourage them because it would let them feel more confident, to feel that they were able to achieve even the hardest rule and get the medal at the end of the week. This method was used equally with the following rules and on this way the process continued.

It was known that the mediator would not work equally on all children, since each one is a different and singular person and as individual he/she experiments, assimilates and behaves in a unique way. The goals of this mediator were accomplished:

- Most of the children got to follow all the classroom rules.
- Realized their misbehaviour and self-assess about those.
- Had become responsible of their actions.
- Got to solve problems according to new thinking ways.

All of these affirmations could be stated on the grounds of the children actions. For instance, kids talked softly with a medium pitch, raised their hands and waited for their turn when they wanted to speak, asked things saying “please” and then “thank you”, did

not hit to their classmates, hanged their coats or smocks on their hangers, used the litter bins, etc. What is more, some of the children, in spite of being so young, showed a surprising honesty and sense of responsibility. The children knew when they had broken the rules and them-selves said to the teacher, in a really touching way, to go and take one star out of theirs. Sometimes one child did not realize his/her misbehaviour and then was another classmate the one who warned to the kid and the teacher so they could carry out the corresponding action on the mediator. The acquisition of new solving-problems techniques is proved when some children rushed to tell the teacher, vehemently but seriously, that one of his/her classmates had hit him/her. It is greatly remarkable that they were able to control their usually primary reaction that would be consisted in immediately striking back.



Picture 12: The children with their medals achieved.

Developing the **resource three**, the first challenge was to choose wisely the emotion representative faces. There were found many similar faces. Therefore, a meditated selection was required in order to pick those that best represented the more obvious and identifiable moods. The variety, and simplicity at the same time, of the feelings that children could have as available in the mediator, was also a factor thoroughly considered (Annex 3).

Some relevant achievements were got through the mediator which works on emotion recognition and sociability:

- To be aware of the different emotions that can be felt.

- To be aware of their self-emotions controlling them changing their moods in order to be happier.
- To be aware of the other's emotions learning how to be social.

A nice “picture” could be considered as evidence: kids standing up in front of the mediator, softly rocking or scratching their heads or seriously focused, while they were thinking about how they feel and eventually moving and placing their picture into the jar that best represent them.

Many significant attitudes were got with a reflective talking to the children. The young teacher asked the kids the reason of their jar choice, why they were feeling sad, happy, bored or angry. If necessary or requested, the young teacher kindly and patiently advised the children how to change their feelings. The pupils, after listening thoughtfully and admiringly to the young teacher, used to act according what she proposed. Again, a noticeable behaviour was perceived when some children helped their classmates, through positive words or even with moving actions as a hug, to feel better and be happier. As it was mentioned earlier, this fact was observed in relation with the resource one too.

Finally, the **second resource** presented also a challenge. Although it was less stressful than the former ones, its design took much longer time. It consisted in finding the most clear and representative images (Annex 2) in order the children easily associate them with the classroom routines already established by the current teacher. Last but not least, it was also important to situate the mediator on a visible and accessible place on a classroom wall, so that the children could easily get to move the arrow.



Picture 13: One child moving the arrow to the next



It was rewarding to verify the effectiveness of the mediator and the objectives achieved:

- To think differently.
- To solve problems.
- To read images, words and numbers.
- To become aware of the time concept
- To sequence (and therefore to predict) moments, events, numbers, words or routines.
- To narrate their lives through the language.
- To take control of their own time being able of organized themselves.

Children stopped asking what they were to do next as they knew at a glance how to place themselves in time because they were able to read the images or words sequencing the activities. Furthermore, this tool gave the children the ability to anticipate the next routine. For example, when they finished the worksheet, the previous activity showed some days on the timetable before the snack card, they hurried to take in a confident way and without asking anybody their snacks.

In addition, when the adult kindly asked them to tell what they had done along the day in the school they were able to explain the moments if not by heart, definitely by looking to the timetable as reminder, implementing expressive narrative words and sentences, which proved that they could organize their minds at the time they were thinking and speaking.

## **6.2. REGARDING THE NEWCOMER TEACHER**

The fact of having written this “TFG” has represented a signified responsibility, as well as continuous learning, intensive researches, theoretical knowledge implementations, deepening into knowledge, abilities developing, etc.

Regarding the **teacher skills**, these were performed stressing the autonomy on the kids by relying on them tasks as self-assessment, routines control or emotions dealing. These opportunities had also an international background, as some of the ideas were taken

from foreign countries and sometimes the language used on its implementation was not only Spanish but also English. Furthermore new literacy techniques had been taught (among others, to read the timetable, for example). Ending with one of the most relevant challenge in early years teaching: to establish a new routine in an early years' classroom by implementing the appropriate scaffolding system to be followed.

The present “TFG” means the end point on the student chosen degree and gives sense to all the studying years which have been dedicated to its achievement. Being this “TFG” closely joined to the last internship period of the degree, has contributed to a more real and closer process. Consequently, not only the emotional intelligence had been treated in children, but also the newcomer teacher own emotions were involved. Those feelings make the young teacher be expectant in presence of the new methodology application challenge, and equally to be proud when those new methods have worked and proved to help the personal growth of the children.

In addition, an unexpected but really rewarding perform has been achieved. The young teacher met some of the children out of the educative environment. The children still considered her as a teacher even not being in the classroom. She took profit of the situation and, keenly using a suitable language, encouraged them to apply and demonstrate the knowledge she knew they had. The children felt very proud of themselves. This fact was greatly significant for both, the children and the teacher, and contributed to strength their mutual affection.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

On the basis of the results achieved, it can be considered that the implementation of the mediators in a class of Early Years (four or five year old children) in the school previously described<sup>21</sup> has been a successful tool during the period of time the resources have been applied. There have been collected enough evidences which prove that the mediators have accomplished their functionality on the children's Basic Competences

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<sup>21</sup> See pages 10 -12.

development. They have promoted the autonomy, the responsibility and the socializing in the children.

In addition they have proportionate relevant positive emotional feelings, in both, the children and the young teacher. Consequently the mediators have proved to be effective tools to get a more effective and humanistic teaching in that classroom.

Therefore it is considered that there are grounded reasons to continue deepening on this highly interesting topic.

Finally, the results obtained are in agreement with the authors Gardner, Goleman, Vygotsky, Gilligan, Montessori and Bruner; and in disagreement with Piaget and Kholberg.

## **8. REFLEXIONS**

On the last pages of this “TFG”, the final academic work of the teacher degree, it is necessary to look back and think about all the process followed to develop it. Furthermore, to think about what the writer of this “TFG” have learnt and also if the objectives of the resources implemented and competences that she is due to have as a teacher have been achieved, but that was reflected on the Results. On these lines is the moment to reflect the general impressions of the student, the general view of the whole development process of this work.

The newcomer teacher has the idea of writing about the importance of the Basic Competences (particularly the autonomy, responsibility, sociability and civility) in Early Years Education. However, she must thanks the opportunity of spending the Internship on the many times mentioned school, and specifically thanks the current teacher since she was an open-minded person who likes to learn and experiment with new methods and ideas in her classroom. She kindly allowed the young teacher on her Internship Period to implement her ideas and resources designed with the classroom pupils.

For that reason, the initial idea could be more deeply discussed and the young teacher could carefully choose and adapt the resources thinking of improving the way of working with the Basic Competences in a specific group of young learners covering additionally their needs through the main goal to which is focused this “TFG”. That way, the results became much more specific and real than they would be if the resources had not been implemented.

The overall process, result and conclusions were really positive as the mediators accomplished its functionality on the Basic Competences development in the children of whom the newcomer teacher was so fond. The positive results encourage the newcomer teacher to continue researching on this way. Of course, she must always adapt herself to the new pupils and try to improve and increase her knowledge. The teacher profession needs precisely that: to be worried about the self-renewed in order to become a better professional.

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## ANNEX 1: Resource one

### CREATION PROCESS

Rules poster that was already placed on the classroom wall.



Grid Display with four of the rules, all the names of the classroom pupils, and five happy stars in each box.



Medals ready to be delivered to the pupils who had accomplished the four challenges of the week without losing any star.



### PROGRESS AND RESULTS

The following grid shows the week progress observed along the implementation of the behaviour mediator. The “X” marks the target rules to be achieved by the children. Once the pupils have accomplished one rule, this rule is replaced for other rule which again represents a new challenge for the kids. Always the number of rules to achieve is four.

WEEK PROGRESS OBSERVED	RULES						OBSERVATIONS
	We talk without shouting. — We talk with a medium pitch.	We use the litter bin	We don't hit — We treat our classmates well.	We hang our coats	We wait our turn to talk	We ask things saying “please” and the “thank you”	
1°	X	X	X	X			That week the presentation of the mediator to the children was performed.
2°	X	X	X	X			
3°	X	X	X		X		
4°	X		X	X		X	
5°	X		X		X	X	By the end of this week most of the kids had achieved two of the rules asked that week. Consequently, the same rules will be asked for the next week.

## **ANNEX 2: Resource two**

### **ORIGINAL IDEA**

The original idea was got from a video that the American teacher Jennifer Hawkins uploaded on the webpage “Teaching Channel”.



### **CREATION AND PLACEMENT PROCESS**

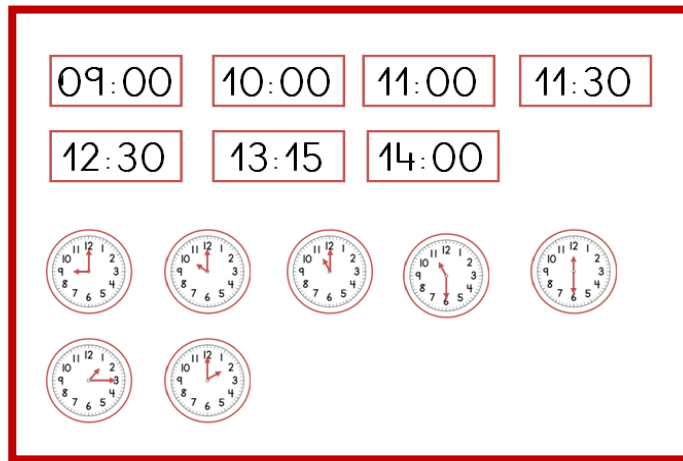
- The pictures chosen to be included on the timetable cards.



- First presentation and location of the mediator in the classroom.



- When the clocks idea arose, this picture shows the clock building and design.



- The mediator with the digital clocks, as that numbers reading of this kind of clock is easier to the children.





- The mediator with the digital and analogue clocks. The analogue ones were added just on the following day to the implementation of the digital clocks. This decision was taken thinking of the children who will understand the analogue clocks too. They will help to their classmates who do not understand them, to do it.



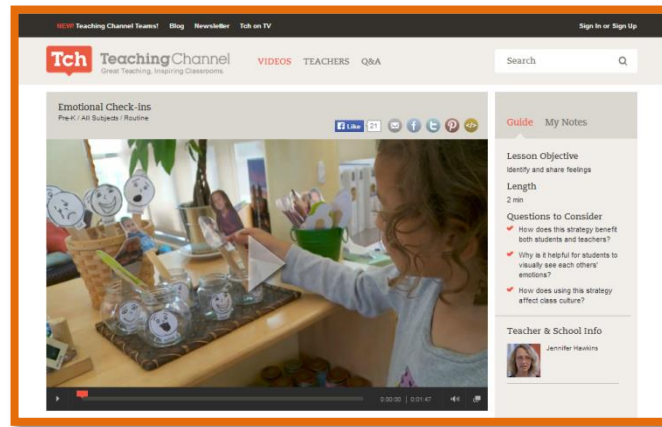
- Final presentation of the mediator.



## ANNEX 3: Resource three

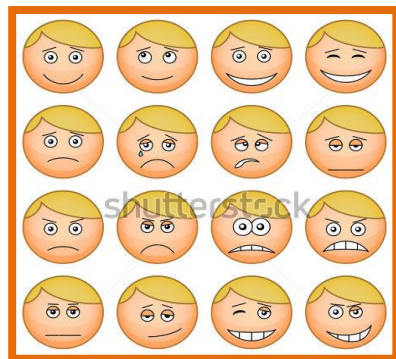
### ORIGINAL IDEA

The original idea was got from a video that the American teacher Jennifer Hawkins uploaded on the webpage “Teaching Channel”.

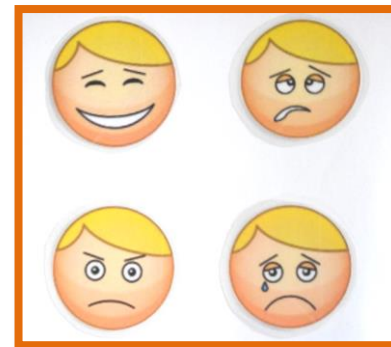


### CREATION PROCESS

- First, from a wide variety of emotion faces were selected the four more clearly, and at the same time also varied, so that children could more easily identify themselves with the available emotion faces.



7





- Happy/feliz
- Bored/aburrido
- Angry/enfadado
- Sad/triste

➤ After a while, there would be added two more emotion faces. Again, carefully selected.

