



**FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN DE PALENCIA**

**UNIVERSIDAD DE VALLADOLID**

**ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN A  
BILINGUAL CLASS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION THROUGH REAL MATERIALS:  
MOVIES**

**(EDUCACIÓN MEDIOAMBIENTAL EN UNA CLASE BILINGÜE EN  
EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL A TRAVÉS DE MATERIALES REALES:  
PELÍCULAS)**

**TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO**

**EN EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL**

**MENCIÓN LENGUA EXTRANJERA INGLÉS**

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*A mi familia, que me ha apoyado en mis decisiones,  
animándome a seguir mis sueños.*

## **RESUMEN**

En este Trabajo de Final de Grado podemos encontrar una investigación sobre la educación medioambiental en los últimos años, junto con una búsqueda sobre la educación interdisciplinar, más centrada en el ámbito bilingüe de la primera lengua extranjera (inglés) y una indagación sobre el uso de materiales reales (películas) en un aula de manera didáctica.

Esta investigación luego ha dado lugar a la creación de un proyecto que involucra todo lo anterior: la educación medioambiental a través del inglés mediante películas. Este proyecto lo he implantado posteriormente en un aula de Educación Infantil, para comprobar su efecto con los niños y niñas.

## **PALABRAS CLAVE**

Educación medioambiental, aula bilingüe, Educación Infantil, educación interdisciplinar, educación holística, materiales reales.

## **ABSTRACT**

In this Final Degree Project, we can find research about environmental education in the last years, together with an investigation into interdisciplinary education, more focused on the bilingual field of the first foreign language (English) and a study about the use of real materials (films) in a classroom.

This research then led to the creation of a project involving all of the above: environmental education through English and films. This project was implemented in an Early Childhood Education classroom to test its effects on the children.

## **KEY WORDS**

Environmental education, bilingual classroom, Early Childhood Education, interdisciplinary education, holistic education, real materials.

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# INTRODUCTION

In this Final Degree Project, I want to prove that working with real materials (movies in this case) is a genuine way of introducing environmental education in a bilingual classroom in Early Childhood Education.

I will research environmental education in Early Childhood and also focus on that education in a bilingual classroom. I am also going to talk about a proposal for a learning situation for Early Childhood Education that involves the topic of environmental education in a bilingual classroom in a Spanish school, being English as the foreign language.

Environmental education is a vital topic in this day and age because of all the climate problems we have nowadays: the melting of icebergs at the poles, increasing the level of the oceans and seas; the hole in the Ozone Layer; the lack of rain in certain areas producing droughts; or loss of biodiversity, for example. It is crucial to educate children about these problems, the causes and the ways to help stop them as a community. It is important to start from an early age with simple ways to help prevent these problems and get into more complex information, such as causes, as the pupils continue to grow.

Taking into consideration that we are working with pupils from Early Childhood Education, we need to keep in mind that they are very young (from two to six years old), and they will not be able to fully understand the environmental effects of our actions as human beings. Still, they can start taking action to help the environment with simple acts such as recycling.

Early Childhood Education is nowadays designed in an interdisciplinary way, meaning the pupils can learn about different things at the same time, not separating the different areas into periods. Having the pupils learn about different topics at the same time (like English and writing, for example) will help them reach a holistic development of their personal and educational capabilities.

With the realisation of this Final Grade Document, I want to prove that I have achieved the different competences that I am expected to achieve as a student of the Early Childhood Education Degree (following the document of “General Competences” from the University of Valladolid for “Grado en Educación Infantil”).

One of these competences is knowing how to apply my knowledge to my work or vocation in a professional manner and possess the competences that are usually demonstrated through the elaboration and defence of arguments and problem-solving within my area of study –Education–. With the planning of the learning situation proposed later on in this document, I can show that I can make well-argued decisions, for which I have to integrate the different information and knowledge needed to resolve different educational problems.

Another competence is being able to convey information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences. With the writing of this research and proposal, I proved that I can communicate in writing to different people because with the realisation of the learning situation I had to communicate orally with the teachers involved in the classroom.

The last general competence I can prove I achieved with this project is the development of an ethical commitment as a professional, strengthening the idea of comprehensive education, with critical and responsible attitudes; advocating values of a culture of peace and democratic values. The proposal created for this project shows that I want to encourage different democratic values within the pupils, such as tolerance, solidarity, justice and non-violence; and also promote the knowledge and value of human rights and obligations, in this case taking care of our environment.

In the document previously mentioned, we can also see the specific competences that we, as future Early Childhood Education teachers, must have accomplished too by the end of the degree. With the realisation of this project, I am going to show some of the competences I have accomplished during these years.

During the time spent learning for the degree, I developed the ability to know how to promote the acquisition of habits based on various aspects, like autonomy, freedom, curiosity, observation, etc. I developed these abilities through different ways, like creating different routines in the classroom for the pupils to follow.

As a future Early Childhood Education teacher, I should be able to analyse and critically incorporate the most relevant issues in today's society that affect family and school education. Also, I need to be capable of working with the social and educational impact of audio-visual languages and digital screens, as well as with the educational

implications of information and communication technologies and, in particular, of television in early childhood.

I should also be able to promote the capacity of analysis and the acceptance of the possibility of change in various aspects, such as gender, multiculturalism, interculturalism, and sustainable development, among others. Designing and organising activities that promote values such as non-violence, tolerance, democracy, solidarity and justice is another way of proving my achievement of the competences.

In this project, I show that I can understand the importance of systematic observation as a basic tool to be able to reflect on practice and reality, as I had to observe the reality of the classroom before planning appropriate activities for the pupils. Also, I had to use systematic observation to evaluate and assess the pupils' results and processes during the activities.

With this project, we can see the different types of content that can be worked with in one single learning situation when it is designed in an interdisciplinary way.

## OBJECTIVES

As I said before, this Final Degree Project's main objective is to prove that working with real materials (movies in this case) is a genuine way of introducing environmental education in a bilingual classroom in Early Childhood Education.

It is important to understand that schools, in our case in Spain, work in Early Childhood Education in an interdisciplinary way, having all of the different areas that form this stage of education mixed and worked with at the same time.

Taking this into account, these are the specific objectives for this project:

- To comprehend the necessity of having environmental education in Early Childhood.
- To understand the methodologies used in an interdisciplinary classroom to work with environmental education and a second language (English).
- To create an educative proposal that uses real materials to introduce environmental topics in a bilingual way in an Early Childhood classroom.



# THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

It is well known that the Earth's environment is suffering from human behaviour, like the deterioration of the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect or climate change. For this reason, it is important to teach the pupils about the Earth and involve them in environmental education, especially in early childhood, creating a base for the future.

Environmental education, properly understood, should constitute a comprehensive lifelong education, one responsive to changes in a rapidly changing world. It should prepare the individual for life through an understanding of the major problems of the contemporary world, and the provisions of skills and attributes needed to play a productive role towards improving life and protecting the environment with due regard given to ethical values. By adopting a holistic approach, rooted in a broad interdisciplinary base, it re-creates an overall perspective which acknowledges the fact that natural environment and man-made environment are profoundly interdependent. It helps reveal the enduring continuity which links the acts of today to the consequences of tomorrow. It demonstrates the interdependencies among national communities and the need for solidarity among all mankind. (UNESCO, 1980, pp. 11-12)

Even though this quote is from 1980, it transmits a message that is still important nowadays. To promote a good and diverse environmental education within our pupils, we should not just focus on natural environments, but also on sustainability and a possible future. As teachers, we need to help the children establish an environmental and sustainable way of thinking and living within themselves.

It is important to encourage sustainable mindsets in our pupils, teaching the generations of the future what is wrong in the natural world and how we, as normal humans, can be more environmentally friendly.

We can also see in the quote by UNESCO that the methodology best used in environmental education is the holistic methodology. This pedagogy has been called with

different types of names and has its traditional roots in various authors, such as Rousseau, Froebel or Montessori, for example.

Ron Miller defines holism as “the existential, archetypal, and physical connections between human life and all other life, between humanity and the planet itself, and between humanity and the vast unfolding process of the Cosmos” (1992, p. 6). When working with the environment in all levels of education we have to talk about the different relationships that humans establish with different aspects of the planet.

Humans have relationships with animals, not only the domestic ones, but also the wild ones, and that relationship can sometimes end with species at risk of extinction. Humans also have relationships with other living things, such as vegetation, that help us survive, but also endanger the natural environments that surround us.

Miller et al. define holistic education as “the focus on reaching the whole child – body, mind, and spirit” (2022, p. 74). It is crucial that, when we work with kids, we take into account them as a whole not just work with their minds, but also involve their bodies, their senses, and their souls.

When education follows a holistic methodology, the pupils can be fully involved in their learning and can realise their connection to different forms of life: other humans: like their classmates, teachers or family members, and animals: like their pets, animals in their community or wild animals.

Samples and Hammond (1985) focus more on the educational aspect of holism: the holistic learning. To fulfil this holistic learning, we have to take into account the different modes and styles of learning pupils have.

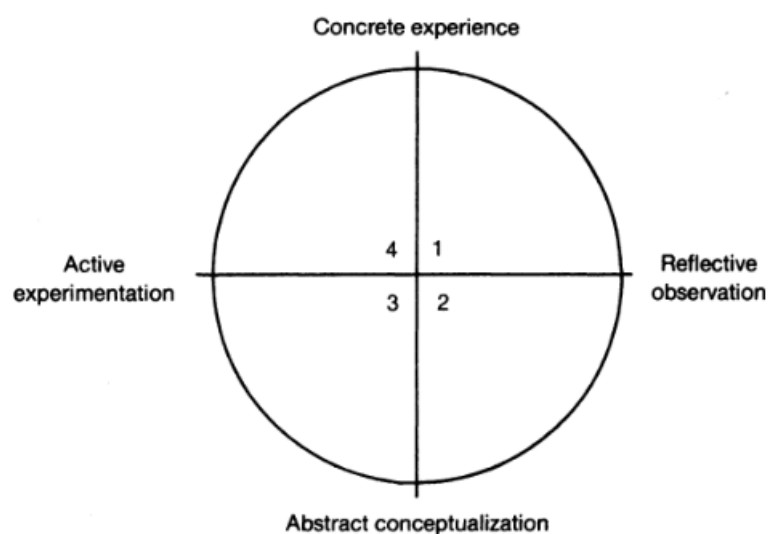
These modes refer to the way the information pupils are exposed to is taken by the brain (as input) and then restructured and expressed (as output). The different modes the pupils can learn through are (Samples and Hammond, 1985, p. 42): symbolic-abstract, visual-spatial, auditory, kinesthetic and synergic. As Samples and Hammond indicate, pupils do not just follow one of these modes, because no one is monomodal, but everyone has a preferred mode to use when learning.

The different styles of learning involve the way the information is processed. These styles can be divided into (Samples and Hammond, 1985, p. 42): active

experimentation – reflective observation and concrete experience – abstract conceptualization, which are four different styles that are opposite on a two-by-two basis. Samples and Hammond explain the quadrants that McCarthy (1980) created by combining these styles.

**Figure 1**

*The four quadrants*



*Source:* Samples & Hammond (1985) *Holistic learning*, p. 42.

When we take into account both the learning modalities and the learning style, we have a holistic perspective of education, in the specific form of planning as teachers. The more learning styles and modalities we make our pupils use, the more exposed they are to them, getting the pupils to use their preferred one all the time. With this, all of the pupils will have to pass through the different modalities and styles. Sometimes they will prefer the ones they are working with and other times they will not, but this way all of the pupils will be able to learn in their preferred method from time to time.

Martínez (2010, p. 99) described various global features of the social and environmental crisis. I am not going to talk about all of the features, just the ones I consider most important from the perspective of environmental education:

- The human lifestyle destroys the relationships involved with society and the biosphere: as teachers, we need our pupils to learn a different way of living that harms the environment in the least possible way, making the children

conscious of their own actions and how those actions affect the world around them.

- The Aristotelian idea that human actions are separated from the natural world, conceiving the human relationship with nature in an anthropocentric way: the kids have to know that humans are not the centre of the world and they need to understand that our actions, as humans, are not separated from the natural world, and they always have repercussions.
- The market-centric approach that focuses on valuing things and emphasising profit: the pupils should have in mind since they are kids that when doing something, they should not focus on the value things have or on the profit they can gain when finishing, but on the experience it gives to them and on the impacts it has on society and the environment, especially their closest one.
- The deterioration of fossil fuels and, consequently, the need to save them and look for clean and renewable alternatives: the kids need to understand that the future is renewable and needs clean options.

Through education, all different populations can be alerted of the most pressing problems that exist in the world. It can present multiple concepts and approaches for understanding all those problems and teach the knowledge and determination needed to resolve the different environmental problems (UNESCO, 1980, p. 21).

Education is the basis of a person's personality and way of life, not only the education given at home, but also the education given at school. Everything the children are not learning at home regarding values, they need to learn at school, but it is not very easy to know what all of our pupils are learning at home, so it is necessary to have all of them learn the same. For this reason, important values have to be worked with in the school, like companionship, kindness, respect, gratitude, or, in the case of this research, environmental values.

Martínez defends that environmental education has to stimulate and promote different pro-environmental values and attitudes, qualifying the kids to analyse socio-environmental conflicts (2010, p. 102). Environmental education should be started in early childhood, even though the kids are very young to fully understand the problems in

the world, they can start creating environmentally friendly habits that they will carry out in their daily and adult lives.

As Didonet explained in 2008, every person's first years of life are crucial in developing values and mindsets that shape their personalities (p. 26). Introducing environmental education and values into children's lives since they are young will result in environmentally conscious adults who take responsibility for their actions.

Kaga indicates that Early Childhood Education is the basis of all the learning and development in children's lives, as basic life skills and predilection towards learning are acquired in these early years (2008, p. 54). Generating a sense of responsibility towards the environment within the pupils is fundamental in the world we are living in.

Didonet also defends that kids in their early years are sensitive to nature and interested in its elements and that adults who live in urban areas remember enjoying moments and memories that occurred in rural spaces full of plants and natural elements (2008, p. 26). It is important to consider the pupils' interests to create meaningful learning for them and, taking advantage of their interest in everything natural, we, as teachers, need to promote said meaningful learning involving developing an environmental conscience for their future.

Environmental awareness and acts of kindness can be very similar when working in early childhood. The living things in the environment that the kids live in have different needs, and this provides opportunities for the children to be considerate and compassionate, thinking of others and engaging in their community (Pancheri-Ambrose & Tritschler-Scali, 2013, p. 55).

A good way to engage with the pupils' interests is by using things they like and developing them into the contents and basic knowledge we want the pupils to have and learn. For example, if our pupils like and are interested in water animals, we can utilise that to talk about not only the different animals that live in the water, but also what they eat and how that can be affected by the pollution caused by humans not recycling.

Nowadays we have the Agenda 2030, in which there are 17 goals for sustainable development, which are worked with in many schools these days because of their importance for future generations. These goals are (UNITED NATIONS, n.d.):

1. No poverty.
2. Zero hunger.
3. Good health and well-being.
4. Quality education.
5. Gender equality.
6. Clean water and sanitation.
7. Affordable and clean energy.
8. Decent work and economic growth.
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure.
10. Reduced inequalities.
11. Sustainable cities and communities.
12. Responsible consumption and production.
13. Climate action.
14. Life below water.
15. Life on land.
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions.
17. Partnerships for the goals.

For environmental education, we can work specifically with some of these goals:

6. Clean water and sanitation: this goal focuses on ensuring that everyone on Earth has access to safe drinking water, and can be worked with children by talking about water dams and reservoirs.

7. Affordable and clean energy: this goal focuses on ensuring that everyone on Earth has access to affordable and sustainable energy, and can be worked with kids by talking about saving light and solar panels.

12. Responsible consumption and production: this goal focuses on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, and can be worked with children by talking about seasonal products and how production works.

13. Climate action: this goal focuses on combating climate change and its impacts, and it can be worked with kids by talking about climate change, the ozone layer and the greenhouse effect and how to help undo all of them.

14. Life below water: this goal focuses on conserving and using the oceans, seas and marine resources sustainably, and can be worked with children by talking about the different water ecosystems, their inhabitants, how humans endanger the ecosystems and their inhabitants and how to protect them in our daily lives.

15. Life on land: this goal focuses on protecting, restoring and using terrestrial ecosystems sustainably, and can be worked with kids by talking about the different terrestrial ecosystems, their inhabitants, how humans endanger the ecosystems and their inhabitants and how to protect them in our daily lives.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN A BILINGUAL CLASSROOM**

Nowadays, education in Spain at all levels is at least bilingual and, in some cases, it can also be multilingual. For example, there are Autonomous Communities where they have their own official second language or schools that offer more languages for the pupils to learn.

The special factor about Early Childhood Education is that it is interdisciplinary: all subjects are worked together in a project format, which means that every subject the pupils learn in school is developed simultaneously, instead of having a specific time for each one.

The main problem with interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary education is combining subjects that, at first glance, have nothing in common. In the case of this Final Degree Project, English and environment.

When talking about interdisciplinarity, the main aspect is the blending of the different areas or disciplines that are worked on in Early Childhood Education. There must be no clear distinction between the areas, because then it is not interdisciplinary, it is just different areas worked at the same time.

When working in a transdisciplinary way, the pupils will work on various disciplines at the same time, like writing, reading, mathematics and English, without separating them.

As I am saying, the key to working in an interdisciplinary way is to completely integrate seamlessly the different areas into a project. The children should just be able to carry out the work they have in front of themselves without distinguishing fully which discipline it belongs to and the change of area when working.

In the Early Childhood years, kids learn how to write and read, start learning a second language (in some cases even a third or fourth language) and learn mathematical basics (numbers, counting, addition and subtraction) while learning about different topics (like animals, families, the school, etc.). These main topics can involve the different areas for example, when learning about animals we can:

- Learn them in Spanish.
- Learn them in English.
- Learn about different classifications.
- Work with numbers, in both languages (the number of mammals, the number of legs, etc.).
- Write and read different information about animals.

Reusing what Didonet explained for environmental education in 2008, the years of Early Childhood Education, in which the pupils are three, four and five years old, are vital for the kids' learning, which means that they are the best years to start introducing a new and foreign language to children. Working in a bilingual classroom, in our case with Spanish and English, we need to understand that the kids are still learning their first language, meaning they will not be able to learn the new foreign language, but get used to it and understand basic phrases.

Keeping in mind this, we, as English teachers, should not expect Early Childhood pupils to produce anything in the foreign language, but get them used to hearing it and understanding simple sentences, such as "come to the carpet" or "sit down", and to understand and recognise the meaning of different things like body parts, colours, animals



or family members. As the kids grow up and get to the highest level of Early Childhood Education, some of them could be able to produce some words or even simple collocations in English, but just some of them.

This ensures that when the kids move on to Primary Education, they will be able to understand more complex phrases and manage to start producing the language themselves.

With this already established, we need to understand that English in a bilingual classroom in Early Childhood Education would be a way of working contents from other areas but in a different language. It would be necessary to work with those contents also in the first language, letting the kids connect the different information they learn in the different languages.

English could be a way of introducing environmentally sustainable habits within the kids, with simple phrases such as “turn off the lights” or “blue/green/yellow bin” always being said in English (not taking into account if the person who says it is the English teacher or the normal tutor), getting the pupils into sustainable habits and also familiarised with the language.

Mixing areas of knowledge and English together could also be a way of introducing vocabulary in English. The basis of the lesson that involves more interaction between the pupils and the teacher could be done in Spanish, to let the kids have the possibility of fully expressing their ideas. Then, the rest of the activities could be done in English, and could be related to the first part of the lesson, like regarding different vocabulary.

Introducing new concepts first in English rather than in Spanish will help the children create connections, like starting to think in English any time the kids do certain activities. Going back to the examples I shared previously, if the teachers always tell the pupils the colour of the bin in which they have to throw their rubbish in English, when the pupils start to think by themselves in which bin they have to throw a specific item they will think it in English.

The centre of interest methodology would help to mix environmental education with a foreign language. The centre of interest of the learning situation would be

environmental education, which would be linked to other subjects in an interdisciplinary way. In the case of Early Childhood Education, these subjects would not be as delimited as in Primary Education. They would be foreign language (English), reading-writing, and mathematics (mostly counting and identifying numbers).

We, as teachers, must be able to take our pupils' interests and use them to create learning situations that not only get them to learn the things the curriculum mandates, but also learn things that the kids are interested in and want to learn about.

The basis of the different learning situations has to be worked on in the pupils' first language (Spanish) for them to fully understand and integrate the knowledge in their daily lives. Still, some things can be introduced in the foreign language (English), such as the vocabulary related to the specific topic.

With the introduction of new vocabulary in English related to the topic, the kids can not only learn and understand new words in a different language, but also be able to learn new vocabulary in Spanish as well.

The centre of interest methodology was created by Ovide Decroly, who gathered inspiration from different ideas by authors, such as (Muset, 2001, p. 98):

- Rousseau: his ideas revolved around giving our environment and natural surroundings more importance and rejecting the city.
- Pestalozzi: he preached an education revolving around love and knowledge that end up in manual creations.
- Froebel: his educative method was game-based, which can be used for the learning of routines at early ages.

Decroly expresses that the kids have to gain knowledge regarding two topics (1946, p. 34): knowledge of his/her own personality and knowledge of the conditions of his/her natural and human environment.

By carrying out different types of activities on different topics, the pupils can get to see what they like more, what they are better at, what they need help with, letting the kids know their preferences, difficulties and abilities.

Preparing different activities and projects related to the knowledge of the environment will not only introduce the pupils to the natural and surrounding world to them, but also help them understand their reality.

The environment of the kids in Early Childhood Education involves different types of environments (Decroly, 1946, p. 35):

- The human environment, which consists of their family, the school and the social surroundings. The pupils are constantly surrounded by their immediate family members, and in some cases by extended family. Each family is different, making it important to talk about them in school. The kids also start school during this period, meaning they have to work with new kids of various ages (depending on the situation they can share a classroom or the playground/specific activities) and with adults that are not from their families. Also, at these ages, children start going to different activities that make them socialise with different kids from their families or schools.
- The live environment, which consists of animals and plants. The pupils may have pets within their families, but that should not be the only way they know about animals. Animals are not only the house pets the kids may have, they can also be farm animals, which conforms the domestic animals, and there are also wild animals, which the kids should know about. All these animals can be grouped also into different types of categories that can be worked with kids: mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, insects, viviparous, oviparous, herbivore, carnivore, omnivore, hair, feathers, scales, skin, terrestrial, aquatic, flying...
- The non-live environment, which consists of the sun and the stars. Working with the fact that the Earth is a planet can lead to a lot of different topics, like day and night, the sun, the moon, the planets in our Solar System, stars, asteroids, galaxies, etc.

Within all of these environments, we can extract different interests that the pupils may have and convert them into learning situations. This will not only work with the specific contents the kids are interested in, but will also work with connecting contents that are related and interesting or necessary from the teacher's perspective.

In the case of this project, the environment we will work with is the live environment, since we are learning about environmental education and sustainability. This may include different types of animals, but it also can include different ways plants and natural elements can help our lives as humans, how our actions can badly affect the lives of those living things and, in contrast, the way we can help reduce those dangerous effects.

Decroly (1946, p. 37) states that there are three different types of exercises in the centre of interest methodology:

1. Observation: direct observation is necessary to create a scientific mindset within the pupils, constituting a direct personal acquisition from the kids.
2. Association: starting from the different observations made, the pupils start associating the new contents with previous knowledge they have.
3. Expression: these exercises come after observation and association because their purpose is to gather new knowledge and associate it with the previous one, and that will have to be expressed, either by writing or by voice, generating new knowledge.

This states a clear method of action when creating activities for the pupils, being the base observation. When pupils observe different new things, elements or situations we allow them to think by themselves and start associating with different things, elements or situations they already knew about.

Letting the pupils express their ideas is necessary when working with small kids. It can let us, as teachers, see the evolution they can have when speaking, and it can also help us to see different problems the pupils may have.

## **REAL MATERIALS IN THE CLASSROOM**

As I have stated before in this document, I want to introduce environmental education in an Early Childhood Education classroom by using real materials.

Didactic materials can be divided into two different types (Melone, qtd. in Andrijević, 2010, p. 158):

- The materials with a didactic aim, like textbooks, videos that accompany those books, etc.
- The real materials, like newspapers, magazines, movies, radio, etc. These materials do not have a pedagogic intention, but can be used in a didactic way.

Real materials have specific characteristics (Andrijević, 2010, p. 159):

- They are not created without a didactic purpose, but must be didactically functional.
- They have real linguistic use in various contexts.
- They are connected with the present day.
- They show the reality of a culture.
- They show a determined language, from a determined time, place, etc.
- They have to follow the interests of the pupils.

For this research, I want to focus more on a specific material, which is movies. I decided to use movies instead of other materials because, as we can see, there are some communal benefits of using films pedagogically (Johnson, 2015, p. 3):

1. Movies are a way of engaging a wide audience because they can cut to the heart of issues quickly.
2. Movies can serve as a vehicle for collaboration.
3. Movies help building a connection between pupils and teachers.

By using movies in the classroom we can make sure the whole group of kids feels interested in the topic, as movies are not typically used in school to learn, just as a way of spending the spare time. But when we introduce the movies as a way of learning we

shift the view the pupils have of them they realise they can learn from them too, not just entertain themselves.

Movies can be used as an introduction to different topics that are part of the pupils' interests, like for example, recycling, bullying, the space, etc. Movies can depict situations that are similar to others in class. So, when the pupils see them from a different perspective, they can fully realise what is happening, how that affects other parties involved and see how it is resolved in the movie.

Movies can also depict certain behaviours of the actual society, which can help the pupils see how things they and other people do on a daily basis alter the lives of other beings. With the topic I chose, the pupils can see how not recycling, throwing rubbish where it does not belong and destroying natural environments affect the living things in those environments.

Herrman (2006, p. 264) asserts that using clips from movies in the classroom, especially with younger pupils, is a way of modifying their attention span, helping to improve and expand it. Also, it can be a way of providing learning stimuli that are similar to their interests, which can also lead to discussion and critical thinking.

# PROJECT

## OVERVIEW

The basis of this project is the introduction of environmental education in an Early Childhood classroom that is also bilingual. To do so I propose the use of real materials, in this case, movies, as an element to promote thinking within the pupils and a later guided discussion with the classmates.

## CONTEXT

This learning situation can be used and implemented in any classroom belonging to any school where Early Childhood Education is provided. It can be subject to modifications and adaptations to change the specific level and to the specific necessities of the pupils.

The school where I implemented this learning situation is a public school in the city of Palencia, close to different parks and natural areas, such as the river. This school offers different levels of education: nursery (one and two years old), Early Childhood Education (second cycle) and Primary Education.

This school is different from other schools in the area because it is part of the British Council for their Bilingual Program, which starts as early as the first grade of Early Childhood. Apart from this program, the school also has different plans, like the Reading Plan, the Living Together Plan, the STEAM Plan, etc.

The school has different professionals who are able to attend to the different needs of the pupils apart from the normal teachers. The school also has a full-time nurse and different professionals for educational care, speech therapy and language recovery, therapeutic pedagogy and physiotherapy.

The class this learning situation is executed in is one of the four years old classes. This class has nineteen students, seven girls and twelve boys. One girl has developmental problems. She does not produce words, just sounds (with the help of the speech therapist she now can say “*mamá*” and “*papá*”), but she understands everything she is told. She

also has some mobility issues, which are addressed and worked on with the physiotherapist. This means we need to take into account her needs and possibilities when designing the activities and make adaptations for her when necessary.

## **METHODOLOGY**

As I explained in the theoretical background, the different methodologies that I found are best for working with environmental education in a bilingual classroom in Early Childhood Education are:

- Holistic methodology: getting the pupils to connect with the world and all the different types of living creatures that live on it, and start to understand the impact these living creatures have on each other.
- Interdisciplinary methodology: creating a project that involves not only all of the areas in the curriculum, but also the different disciplines in Early Childhood Education, like reading, writing and mathematics.
- Centre of interest methodology: creating a project that takes into account the different interests of the pupils, revolving around a specific topic as the main aspect, but also touches content from other areas or topics.

## **OBJECTIVES**

With this learning situation I have different aims I want the pupils to achieve:

- To start to understand the impact of human actions in a natural environment.
- To recognise different natural elements both in Spanish and English.
- To recognise different animals both in Spanish and English.
- To count different elements in Spanish and English.
- To recognise and name colours in Spanish and to recognise them in English.



- To recognise the different types of rubbish containers (organic, plastic and paper) and what goes into them.

## CONTENTS

From the *DECRETO 37/2022, de 29 de septiembre, por el que se establece la ordenación y el currículo de la educación infantil en la Comunidad de Castilla y León*, pages 48249–48251, 48272–48274 and 48302–48307.

- Sustainable habits and practices related to food, hygiene, rest, self-care and care for the environment.
- Qualities or attributes and functions of objects and materials: colour, size, shape (flat figures), texture and weight. Identification of elements close to their own reality.
- Order relationships in everyday life. Correspondence, classification and comparison according to certain criteria.
- Counting following the number chain. Number line.
- Construction of the sense of number concerning a progressive increase in quantities.
- Graphical representation of numbers.
- Strategies for constructing new knowledge: relationships and connections between the familiar and the new, and between previous and new experiences; scaffolding and quality interactions with adults, peers and the environment.
- Influence of people's actions on the physical environment and on natural and cultural heritage.
- Simple instructions and expressions in a foreign language, associated with classroom routines and games, expressed with redundant productions and supported by gestures and non-verbal language.
- Foreign language lexis in a variety of meaningful contexts.

- Vocabulary growth through projects, conversations, learning situations and literary texts. Different categories and semantic relationships.
- Descriptive language: objects according to different characteristics (what it is, what it is like and what it is for), people (physical features), pictures following an ordered sequence.
- Approximation to the written code, evolving from indeterminate writing and respecting the evolutionary process: global reading and manipulative writing of significant and contextualised words.
- Interpretation of images and short films, and discrimination between reality and the content of games through digital or content of games through digital or audio-visual media with the help of an adult. the adult.

## **ACTIVITIES**

This learning situation is designed to be carried out within five days, being the best time to do so near the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April, because it is the Day of the Earth. In the following tables, I am going to explain the different days/sessions the project has. In the “assembly” category I am writing the questions in English, but they can also be done in Spanish for better communication with the pupils, since the movies will also be played in Spanish.

The outline of the days is always the same:

1. Watch the specific part of the selected movie for that day.
2. Assembly with questions about the movie, mostly focused on the environmental impact.
3. Activities.

In the tables below I am going to explain the different lessons: why I chose that movie, the specific scene I decided to use, the questions for the assembly and the activities.

**Table 1***Day 1: WALL•E*

<b>WALL•E</b>	
<b>WHY THIS MOVIE?</b>	I chose to use this movie for this project because it shows what the Earth could look like in the future if we do not stop creating things that generate rubbish. The way we have been for a while creates and generates too much waste, filling landfills faster than we can process the rubbish, which in some cases is not recyclable. Also, this rubbish not only ends up in landfills, but it plagues the oceans and natural environments, endangering the animal and plant species that inhabit those spaces.
<b>SCENE</b>	The scene I chose to show from this movie is right at the beginning. We can see the state of the Earth and WALL-E working, cleaning the rubbish and transforming it into cubes. We can see his way home, with no humans, plants or animals. The part of the movie where we can see the advertisement about the spaceship for the humans to go to while the robots clean the Earth is skipped. We can also see when WALL-E gets home, and all the things that he has found and collected. Finally, we can also see him go back to work and find a plant.
<b>ASSEMBLY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is happening in the movie?</li> <li>- How is everything? Is it clean?</li> <li>- What can you see? Can you see parks? Can you see people?</li> <li>- Why do you think everything is like that?</li> <li>- What is WALL-E doing?</li> </ul>
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The first activity for this movie consists of locating different elements from the movie in WALL-E's house: doll, bowling pin, insect, gnomes, clock and plant. It can be done either individually in a photocopy or</li> </ol>

	<p>collectively by having the photocopy on a digital board. In my case, we did it collectively, with the photocopy on the digital board one kid at a time came to the board and located in WALL-E's house the specific item with the help of the classmates when needed.</p> <p>2. The second activity for this movie is about shapes with WALL-E's body: triangle, pyramid, square, cube, circle and sphere. After some talk about WALL-E's different body parts, we talk about their shape, which matches in some of the cases with a circle, a triangle and a square. Then, the kids completed the photocopy individually.</p>
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**Table 2***Day 2: Pocahontas*

<b><i>Pocahontas</i></b>	
<b>WHY THIS MOVIE?</b>	I decided to choose this movie because it showcases how humans decide to use the land for their interests without taking into account if it is good for anyone other than them.
<b>SCENE</b>	The scene I decided to choose from this movie is the one in which the English disembark in America and Governor Ratcliffe sings a song about finding gold and becoming very rich and important. We can see different human actions against the forest: digging, bombs, fire, cutting trees and firing guns.
<b>ASSEMBLY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is happening in the movie?</li> <li>- Why do you think they are doing those things?</li> <li>- Do you think it is good to do that?</li> <li>- Is it good for the forest or bad?</li> </ul>

<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The first activity for this movie is an introduction to different elements from the forest with flashcards: waterfall, grass, river, soil, trees, bush. After that, the pupils participate in what I call “point to...” around the classroom: I show a flashcard with one of the elements and have one of the pupils point to the identical flashcard that is around the classroom. Then, I tell them the name of the element and see if they recognise it and point to the flashcard in the classroom without the need to see it before.</li> <li>2. The second activity for this movie is a memory game in small groups. The cards of the game show the same elements that we worked with before: waterfall, grass, river, soil, trees, bush. In our case, the class is divided into three groups to play, and as the kids find all the pairs, we change the groups, so the children have to play with different kids each time.</li> </ol>
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**Table 3***Day 3: Princess Mononoke*

<b><i>Princess Mononoke</i></b>	
<b>WHY THIS MOVIE?</b>	I chose this movie for this project because we can see humans damaging and destroying the forest to injure the different animals that live in it, especially the boars that inhabit that specific forest. This shows how some humans only care about their own interests and intentionally harm the forests and the animals.
<b>SCENE</b>	The scene I chose to use from this movie is the one where the humans are creating fires and cutting down the trees in the forest to infuriate the boars and make them move in mass to the specific location they want.

<b>ASSEMBLY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is happening in the movie?</li> <li>- Why do you think they are doing those things?</li> <li>- Do you think the wild pigs like it?</li> <li>- Do you think it is okay to do those things?</li> </ul>
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The only activity for this movie starts by introducing four different animals that live in the forest (one of them appears in the movie: the wild pig. We also have rabbit, bear and deer). We see the different families of animals we have and find out where each family lives (den, cave, marshland and forest). After that, the kids paint the different habitats and then classify each family into their habitat, sticking the images into the corresponding habitat. Finally, the pupils have to count how many animals are in each family and write it.</li> </ol>

**Table 4***Day 4: Finding Dory*

<b><i>Finding Dory</i></b>	
<b>WHY THIS MOVIE?</b>	I decided to choose this movie because it shows how ships sink into the oceans with all the things and cargo they have on board and fill the bottom of the oceans with rubbish that does not belong there. All this rubbish harms and affects the lives of the different living things that live in the oceans, like fish, turtles, corals, etc.
<b>SCENE</b>	The scene I decided to choose is the one where we can see Dory, Marlin and Nemo swimming near California. There is also a sunken cargo ship. The ship is full of shipping containers and all of the surroundings are full of rubbish from the ship, like juicers and cans. We can see crabs using that rubbish as

	houses instead of shells, and we can see Dory trapped in the plastic rings from cans after the three of them are swimming to get Nemo away from the octopus and they swim through a shipping container.
<b>ASSEMBLY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What do you think is happening in the movie?</li> <li>- What was at the bottom of the ocean?</li> <li>- Why do you think that ship is there?</li> <li>- Do you think all of that rubbish is good for the ocean?</li> <li>- How could we solve it?</li> </ul>
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The only activity for this movie consists of cleaning the ocean with Dory, Marlin and Nemo. The pupils have to choose a plastic/rubbish element that should not be at the bottom of the ocean and take it to the bin. This way they identify elements that do not belong at the bottom of the ocean and clean it because other elements in the game do belong at the ocean.</li> </ol>

**Table 5**

*Day 5: Dr. Seuss' The Lorax*

<b><i>Dr. Seuss' The Lorax</i></b>	
<b>WHY THIS MOVIE?</b>	I chose this movie for this project because it shows how the interests of humans often do not align with the interests of the animals and that endangers their way of living. We can see how humans take everything they want from the forest without any repercussions and without taking into account that those trees and rivers are necessary for the different animals that live in the forest. Also, the animals that used to live in that forest are forced to move and look for another place to live because all of the trees they used to live in

	are now gone and the river is full of oils and chemicals that prevent them from living in it anymore.
<b>SCENE</b>	The scene I chose is the one where The-Once-Ler is singing about his success with the “Thneed” we can see how the forest is destroyed and contaminated by the factory. The trees are cut down to get the leaves, the water is contaminated with oil, which affects the fish. Then we can see all the animals leaving the forest, because they no longer have a place to live and survive.
<b>ASSEMBLY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is happening in the movie?</li> <li>- Do you think doing all those things are good for the forest?</li> <li>- Why do you think the animals are leaving? Do they like how the forest is now?</li> <li>- How could we solve it?</li> </ul>
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The first activity for this movie is talking about the colours that are on the trees in the forest in the movie: orange, pink, and red, the green of the grass and the blue of the sky.</li> <li>2. The second activity consists of talking about the different rubbish containers (organic, plastic and paper), which are the same as the ones we have at the school, their colours and what goes into each one.</li> <li>3. In the last activity, the kids have to go over the dots of the words “organic, plastic, paper” and paint the containers the correct colour. Then cut the different items of rubbish and categorize them, sticking them into the three containers.</li> </ol>

## ASSESSMENT

Following the evaluation criteria that appear in the curriculum I designed the assessment for this project. Some of the aspects that we need to take into account from the evaluation criteria are, for example:



- Participate in projects and activities related to the care of the environment using cooperative dynamics and sharing and comparing their own and others' opinions; all while showing an attitude of respect, care and protection towards the natural environment and animals, identifying the positive or negative impact that some human actions have on them.
- Use their communicative repertoire to explore the expressive possibilities of different languages while participating in situations in which different languages are used, showing interest and curiosity in the different languages.
- Participate in simple communicative interactions in a foreign language related to daily routines and situations and also understand, with the support of images and gestures, the essential content of instructions and brief expressions in a foreign language, responding appropriately with adult mediation and the help of their peers.

The basis of the assessment for this project is direct observation, which would then be transcribed into a rubric. As the pupils are in Early Childhood Education, we have to assess their progress in different aspects, like comprehension or skills.

In the following table, I am going to propose a rubric that could be used to assess the progress of the pupils during this specific project, taking into account the different contents worked with.

This rubric is designed to be filled with the observations gathered about the pupil regarding the different items to be assessed. The rubric is designed to be filled with information about the specific pupil regarding the different items, according to the level of achievement of those items.

**Table 6***Assessment rubric*

<b>Pupil:</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Not achieved</b>	<b>In progress</b>	<b>Fully achieved</b>
Understands the importance of taking care of the environment.			
Identifies the different natural elements worked with.			
Identifies the different animals worked with.			
Counts different elements and writes the corresponding number.			
Identifies different colours and their names.			
Differentiates the three rubbish containers and what goes in them.			
Differentiates the different types of rubbish: organic, plastic and paper.			

*Source: own elaboration.*

## RESULTS

From the beginning of the project, the pupils were able to identify the different actions or situations in the movies that were not environmentally friendly or sustainable. The kids were able to discuss in the assembly why those actions and situations were portrayed in the films according to the topic, giving possible explanations and reasons as to why those actions and situations should not be done.

The kids were able to identify the theme of the project as the sessions passed. They realised that in every movie we watched there was always some human action that affected the natural and animal environment that was in that movie.

I was able to see that they were always more focused on the possible repercussions that the actions could have on the animals, rather than the plants. For a future project, it would be important to focus more on the plants and natural environments and less on the animals. This project's topic could be about the benefits that plants have in our lives.

Another thing I was able to see with this project was the eagerness the pupils displayed with the different types of activities we developed. The pupils were more interested in the activities that required movement out of them, like the ones from *Pocahontas* and *Looking for Dory*.

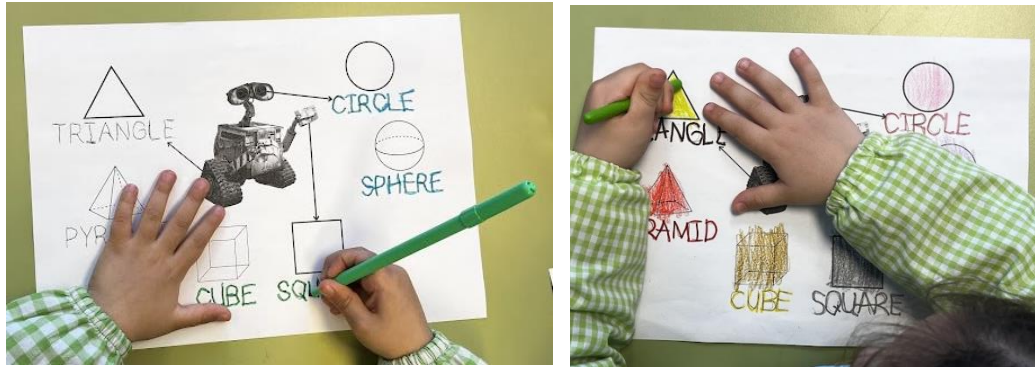
With the activity of "pointing to", the kids were more focused on the different elements and how they were called to be able to participate accordingly in the activity. With the activity of "cleaning the ocean", the pupils wanted to know what the item they chose to clean was called. For another time I would modify some of the activities on this project to make them more active, like the last activity in *Dr. Seuss' The Lorax*, instead of having the kids cut and stick different images of rubbish, they could sort real rubbish into the real containers they have at the school.

When I started my internship with the kids, I could see that most of them knew where the rubbish they created when eating their snacks went, but they needed the confirmation of the teachers before throwing them. Other kids directly did not know where they had to throw their rubbish. During the final session of this project, I could see that all of the kids were confidently asserting the rubbish from the last activity by themselves in the correct bins.

Now, I am going to add some photos of the children doing some of the activities.

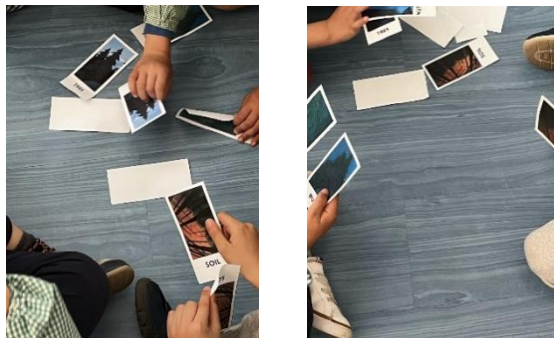
**Figure 2**

*Kids working on the activity of the movie WALL•E*



**Figure 3**

*Kids playing the Pocahontas memory game*



**Figure 4**

*Some of the photocopies made by the kids from the Princess Mononoke activity*





**Figure 5**

*Kids playing the "Clean the sea" game*



**Figure 6**

*Kids working on the activities from The Lorax*



## CONCLUSIONS

Environmental education directed towards sustainable human beings that respect and care for the natural environment on our planet is a growing issue. It is not a problem from the present, as I have reflected in this Final Degree Project, it has been around for many years, and it will continue to be around as long as we want to maintain our planet healthy for our survival.

The main objective of this project was to prove that working with real materials (movies in this case) is a genuine way of introducing environmental education in a bilingual classroom in Early Childhood Education. With the research, it is clear that the early childhood years are the best for introducing habits and languages to pupils.

Using movies is a way of getting the pupils' attention and promoting discussions. Letting the kids express their ideas regarding different topics through guided questions can help them see different ideas. With movies, we can work with different topics or with the same topic through different perspectives, like in this case.

It is clear that working with an interdisciplinary methodology we have to take into account the different areas and disciplines we want the kids to learn and become familiarised with. In this specific project, we give special importance to English, getting the pupils not only accustomed to sustainable habits they can participate in, but also to the new language.

Regarding the project I implemented with the pupils, I can say that the type of activities that the kids prefer and engage with the most are the ones that involve movement. For this reason, it is important and necessary for us teachers to design projects that involve movement within the pupils.

I can also say that a version of this project should be implemented in a classroom in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Early Childhood Education. One of my reasons for choosing the topic of environmental education is that kids should start learning about environmentally friendly habits when they are small. This means that when they start Early Childhood Education being two or three years old, they should start learning about this topic, especially with sorting rubbish, as that is something they have to do themselves when eating their snacks.

In my opinion, projects regarding environmental education should be implemented every year of pupils' education. From their start at school, as I said, until they end the compulsory years because the children of today are the adults of tomorrow, they must understand the current situation of the world and how to stop it.

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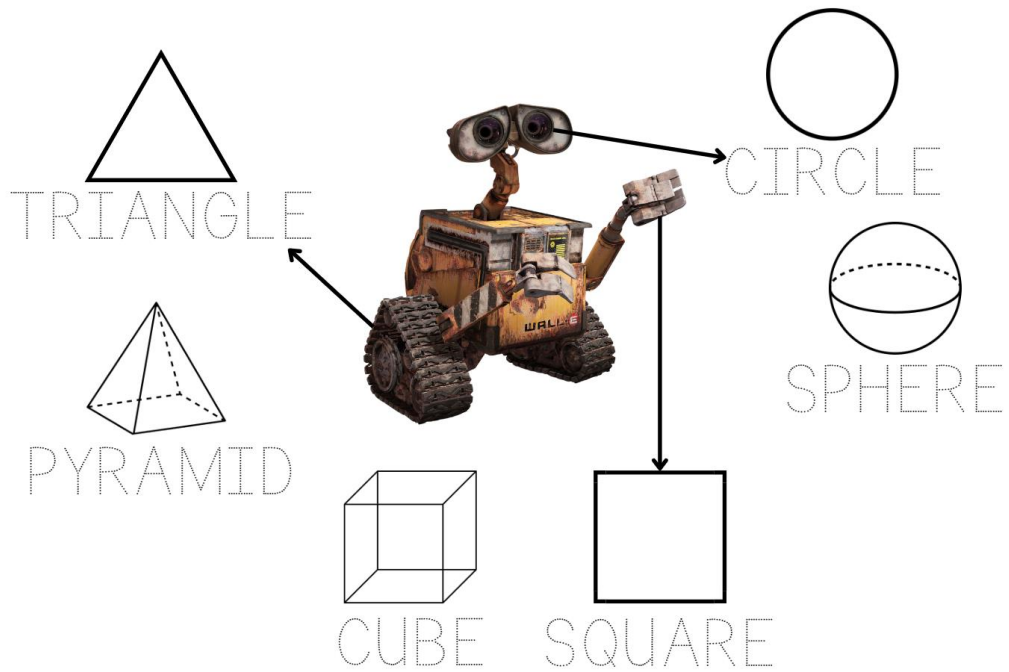
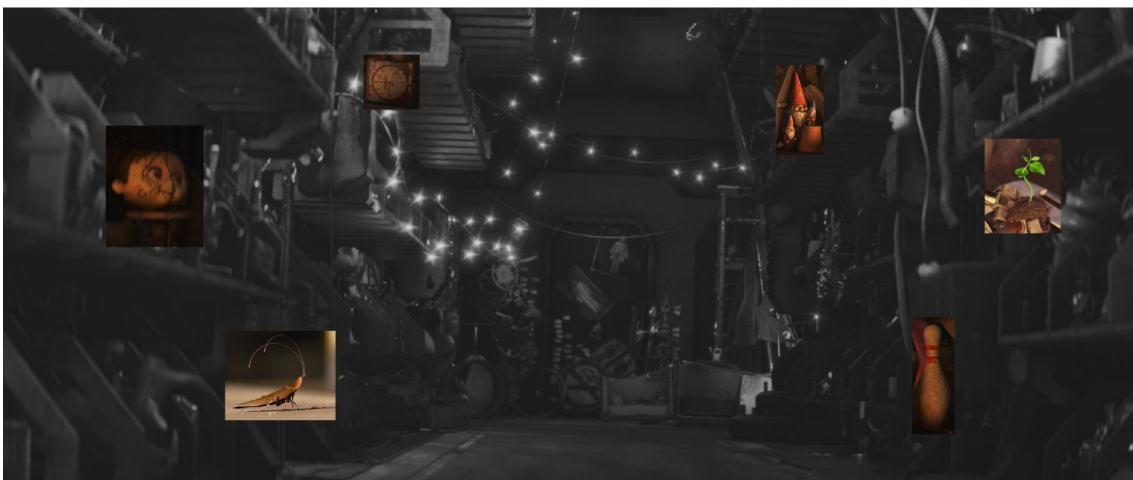
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# ANNEXES

## Annex 1

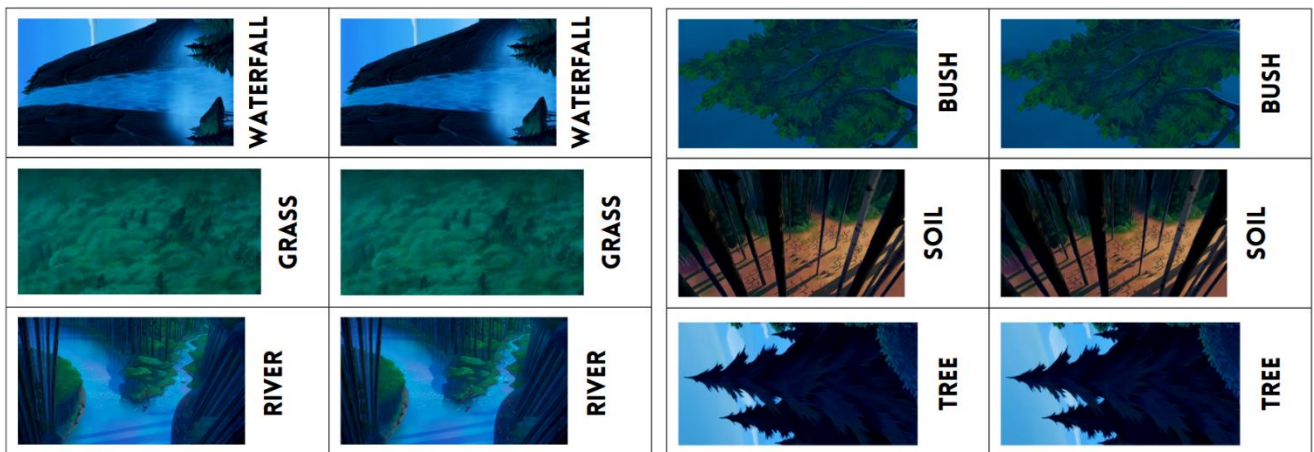
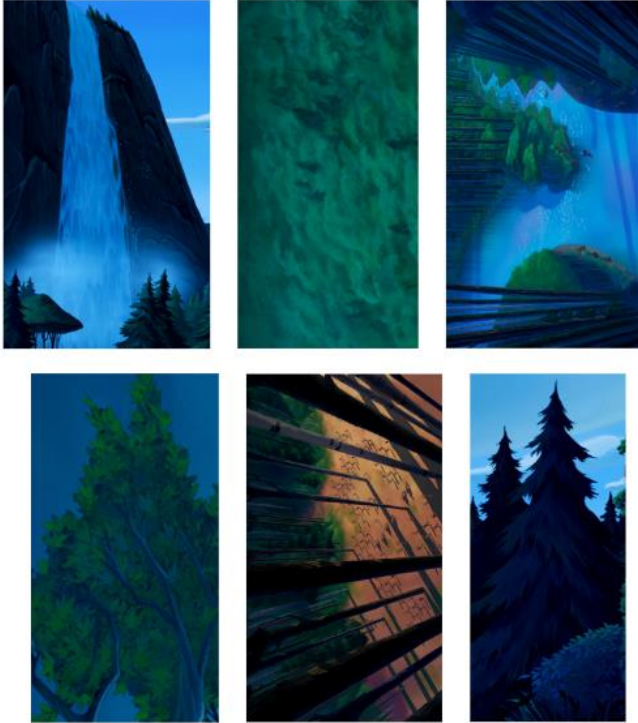
Activities for day 1: WALL•E



Source: own elaboration with images from the movie *WALL•E*, Stanton, 2008.

## Annex 2

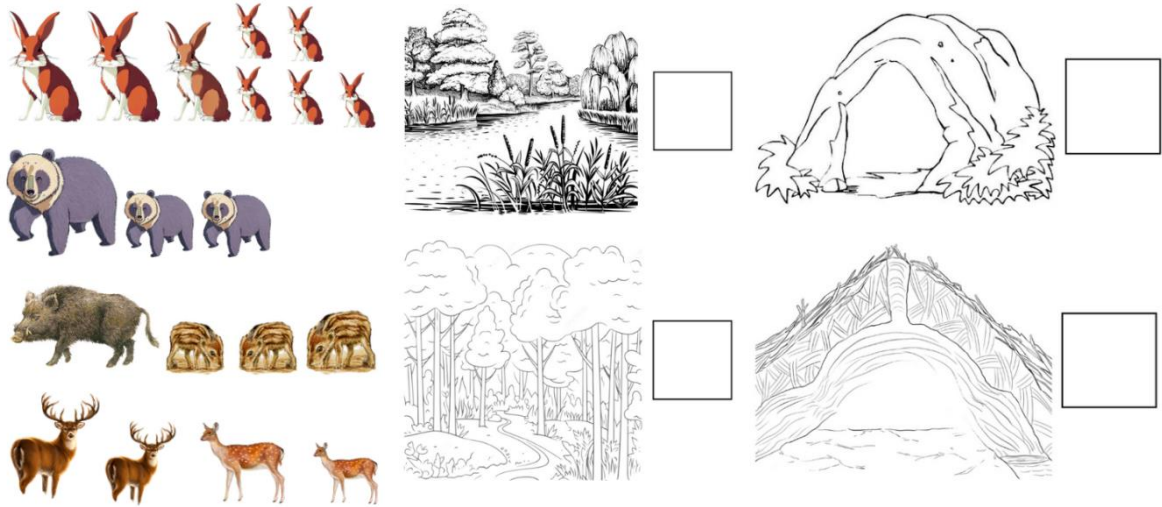
### *Activities for day 2: Pocahontas*



*Source: own elaboration with images from the movie Pocahontas, Gabriel & Goldberg, 1995.*

**Annex 3**

*Activities for day 3: Princess Mononoke*



*Source: own elaboration with images from Google and Studio Ghibli.*

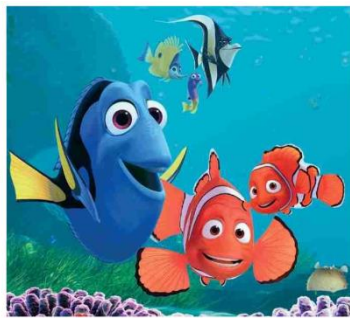
**Annex 4**

*Activities for day 4: Finding Dory.*

**HELP MARLIN, DORY AND NEMO  
CLEAN THE SEA!**



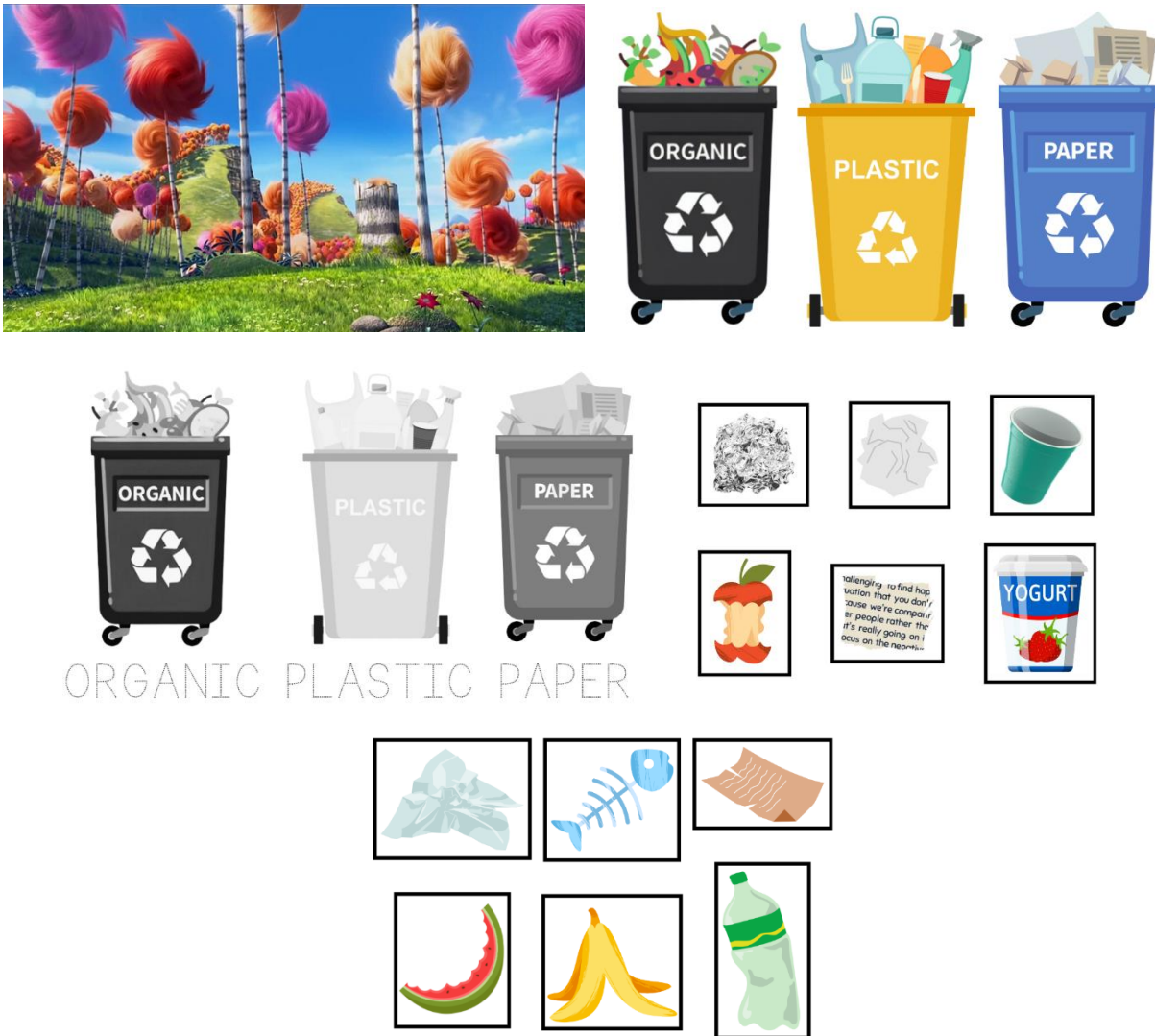
**VERY  
GOOD!!!**



*Source: own elaboration with images from Google and Finding Dory, Stanton & MacLane, 2016.*

**Annex 5**

*Activities for day 5: Dr. Seuss' The Lorax*



*Source: own elaboration with images from Google and Dr. Seuss' The Lorax, Renaud & Balda, 2012.*