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Dissertation report on

New method for teaching a foreign Language adapted to visually impaired children

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Key words:
Curiosity, freedom, environment, projects, motivation

Index	Pages
Abstract and Key words	3
Introduction	4 - 5
a) Justification	4 - 5
b) Objectives	5
Methodology	6 - 7
Structure and development	8 -
a) Investigations' skills	8 - 21
b) Analysis of the current educational outlook	22 - 26
c) The new theory	27 - 35
d) Usage of the new method	36 -41
Conclusions	42 - 44
Bibliography	45 - 46
Appendix	47 - 82
1. Interviews	47 - 63
2. Teaching units	64 - 80
3. Materials examples	80 - 82

ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS

Abstract

This project presents a new methodology that tries to answer detected problems during English language lessons at Spanish Primary Schools, while being adapted to visually impaired pupils.

To achieve this goal, several theories from recognized educators and relevant methodologies have been documented. An analysis of the current educational outlook is also presented, focused in foreign language classes.

During this dissertation, compiled data from the different theories and my own personal experience evolve into pedagogic proposals based on an hypothetical methodology that tries to solve the analyzed problems.

En este proyecto se desarrolla una propuesta de nueva metodología que responda a los problemas detectados en las aulas de las escuelas de Educación Primaria en el área de lengua inglesa, siendo esta además adaptada a alumnos con deficiencia visual.

Con este objetivo se han documentado las teorías de reconocidos educadores y metodologías relevantes para entender el panorama educativo actual, y además se presenta un análisis de la realidad existente en las aulas, haciendo hincapié en las horas dedicadas a la lengua extranjera.

A lo largo de este trabajo, todos estos datos recopilados a partir de los diferentes estudios y mi experiencia personal evolucionan hacia propuestas didácticas basadas en una hipotética metodología que tratará de resolver los problemas analizados.

Key words: Curiosity, freedom, projects, environment, motivation

INTRODUCTION

a) Justification

Nowadays, carrying out an English lesson in our schools can become a difficult task for both teachers and children. I've been to classes where chaos reigned and consequently there was confusion not only about the teachers' methodology, but also about the children's learning process.

According to the general educational system, children study from the age of three until they are eighteen years old. I have been able to see that after the entire process students are still not able to speak English fluently. Therefore, I think there is a big problem in our educational system that we should try to solve.

First of all, children don't use the language regularly either at school or in everyday situations. English lessons are based on grammar and vocabulary skills that kids have to learn by heart. However, they're not learning how to use those contents in a practical context and they're not confident enough to talk because they don't have enough skills to do it. Hence, teachers have to guide and provide their students with materials and methodologies that allow them to learn English as something natural. They have to feel confident to speak and express themselves to understand how to manage the language.

I have decided to create a new methodology that provides teachers with a new view of our educational system and tools in order to adapt their lesson to their students' needs. Moreover, the method includes adaptations for visually impaired children, as they are in trouble during English lessons. In fact they are completely lost for two important reasons:

1. Visual ways to learn vocabulary: teachers that don't want to translate, which is good, use flashcards or picture to explain a new word. As Montessori says, we have to educate our senses in the same way and at the same time, because if we train children's sensitivity, they will be able to organize their minds and choose the best way to learn for them.
2. Ignorance of methodologies for visually impaired children and the usage of braille. Teachers should be aware that they have to constantly update their skills in order to adapt their strategies to students. Coaches, who are scared about new experiences and methodologies, will never improve their task (their job is not only teaching, but also learning). If

teachers are not prepared to make mistakes, they will never be prepared to create something creative.

In conclusion, I want to create a new method for teaching English because there is confusion about methodologies and the teaching and learning process. Moreover there is a big delay in methodologies in our schools and it's time to change our minds and adapt teachers' job to children needs and their natural development.

b) Objectives

- To have an overall picture of the current educational outlook.
- To understand and analyze the problems children can encounter in the classroom and in the English lessons.
- To investigate about already existing methodologies to achieve a global knowledge about the educational approaches.
- To find out the reasons why methodologies used in English lessons are not working.
- To meet the features that visually impaired children present in the classroom.
- To find solutions considering the troubles that visually impaired children have got in English lessons.
- To create a methodology based on others already existing and adapted to visually impaired children.

METHODOLOGY

Creating a new method requires going step by step since there is much information to keep in mind, which is necessary to organize.

1. Investigation of different methodologies:

My suggested method is going to be based on children's curiosity, motivation and sensory education. Therefore, I am going to investigate Maria Montessori's method, because she talked about creating environments where children can feel free to learn and about the sensory education, which is important to organize children's minds and, obviously, to adapt lessons to visually impaired kids. Another part of my research will be based on Rudolf Steiner's Waldorf ideas as well. He thought that the most important thing for learning is to be motivated and to love doing it. Children are naturally curious and teachers have to use this curiosity as the first step for learning and teaching. In addition, I'm going to investigate new methods of teaching and learning processes in English lessons and how they can be adapted to visually impaired children. That includes interviews to ONCE's teachers and schools which are used to work with the appropriate adaptations to these children.

2. Analyzing the current educational outlook and methods used at our schools:

After investigating, I'm going to observe the schools' reality. In particular, methodologies used at English lessons, teacher's training in English skills and children's opinion about the classes. As a result, I expect to find out where the real and the most important problems lie in the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

3. Suggestion of a new theory based on the investigations and analysis previously done:

Once I've know the big problem I am going to try to solve it by suggesting a new theory, which is going to be adapted to visually impaired children. I will suggest the basis of the method, such as the child's curiosity as the first step for learning, or the usage of different environments with a big variety of materials aimed at sensory education. After that, I will apply all those bases to English lessons. Creating an English environment and building trust to speak or freedom to use the language, are going to be the main guidelines of the whole method.

4. How to carry out the new theory:

Finally, I'm going to share my experience by providing teachers with teaching/didactic units, handmade materials and real situations in real schools.

STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

a) Investigation skills

1. Montessori's theory:

Maria Montessori, an Italian revolutionary educator and philosopher, created a method based on children's possibilities and needs. It's an educational philosophy, not science nature, that she developed from her own experiences in "*Casa dei Bambini*". Thus, she was criticized by many analysts and educators, such as Winfried Böhm, who said "*Montessori, más bien, desarrolló un método pedagógico basado en la organización del trabajo y la libertad, para poner en práctica su filosofía*" (S. B. Carmen. *El método de la pedagogía científica. María Montessori. Introducción*).

All her theory revolves around the feeling of freedom that children will find through education to show their personalities. They have to feel themselves free to explore the world and teachers don't have to put a limit to this development with discipline restrictions. However, Montessori thought that this freedom is possible only if you're independent, therefore, the child has to be self-sufficient on his work and learning, as the teacher's work is creating an environment that allows children to auto-educate themselves. Consequently, professionals must provide kids with materials and environments adapted to their needs and motivations. This way, children can use the materials whenever they want, which makes them feel free and confident in their learning. Teachers are the guides of these environments and materials; they have to observe, analyze and act properly to learning situations. As the methodology says "*La maestra enseña poco, observa mucho y sobretodo tiene la misión de dirigir la actividad psíquica de los niños y su desarrollo fisiológico*". (S. B. Carmen, 204).

Moreover, Montessori thought that a teacher, as a guide and helper for children's learning, has to be "*calm, patient, humility and curiosity*" (S. B. Carmen. *El método de la pedagogía científica. María Montessori. Introducción*) and feel confident about what he is doing. If teachers don't love teaching, children won't love learning.

Finally, I want to stand out the Montessori's importance about organization of the places. She thought that if the class is organized, children's mind will be organized too. She means that

the room has to be tidy and the different places to save the materials must be separated clearly to create a tidy up routine and responsibility about the materials.

In contrast, there are some points about Montessori's method that are unlikely to be used in schools:

- Too much usage of materials and not enough socialization: This point was criticized by John Dewey, founder of the pragmatism and “*learning by doing*”, as he thought that the educational action should be carried out in a democracy. That means that children have to be active members of a democratic society. For that reason, dialogue and communication ought to be the educational bases.

I agree with Dewey's thoughts: people are naturally sociable and schools must include this social need as something natural and necessary for the children's development. Kids have to learn interacting rules and basic civil skills, which is only possible if we educate them in a micro-society as similar as possible to the real one. Consequently, children have to speak to each other and not only work individually with specific material, but also work in pairs, little groups and big groups for learning how to show their opinions, express themselves and acquire the basic rules of coexistence.

Therefore, I think it is necessary to provide children with many materials for their own learning, but also, schools need to promote Dewey's ideas about the socialization of children to prepare pupils for the real life.

- Classrooms with too many different levels: Pupils can learn by freedom, but there isn't a clear environment for ages adapted to their development and experiences. Children change their motivations and interests throughout their childhood, consequently the environments need to change and the classroom can't be the same for six-year-olds as for twelve-year-olds, it must be adapted to the kids' needs and development. The groups should be heterogeneous because the real life is diversity and changes. However, children can be organized in groups by needs and motivations in a way in which they can be part of a team and feel confident for expressing themselves. Moreover, a classroom with too many different levels and ages can become a big chaos and a very difficult job for teachers to manage – both the learning process and children's development.
- Sensory education: I think it is necessary to educate all the senses, because then children can choose the best way to learn for them. The most appropriate way to develop kids'

senses is, as Montessori did, preparing materials specifically adapted for them. However, these materials were prepared to develop each sense individually, there wasn't an unifying thread. The senses should be educated as a learning tool, meaning that, students can realize that there are many different ways to learn and know everything about the world. Our senses -sight, hear, touch, smell and taste- can help them understand the real world and their environment. For this reason, teachers have to make children aware that the five senses are different among them but all of them provide us with information and learnings by several ways and students are free to choose the best for them.

2. Waldorf's theory

Rudolf Steiner was the promoter of Waldorf's educational method. He was a teacher of the workers' kids of a cigarettes factory called Wadorf–Astoria in Stuttgart (Germany) where he could learn all about the free school and the new methods for teaching. For that reason, this theory is called Waldorf –Steiner pedagogy, which is based on natural knowledge and human development adaptation. That means, there has to be harmony among intellectual, art and practical activities.

The child is the central point of the teaching – learning process. Consequently, the teacher has to guide the kid to his corporal, psychologic and cognitive development since he is self-sufficient. Children learn in freedom and they are going to develop abilities such as the capacity of judgment, constructive review and flexibility in decisions and actions. This way, children will be able to deal with life's challenges as something natural and necessary in the process of growing up.

In addition, Steiner suggested the idea of *“Everybody works at the School (families, children and teachers)”* (Macarena Moreno Moreno, 2010). If the kid is the central point of the teaching-learning process, it implies that all his environment has to get involved in it. Therefore, the school can create surroundings close to children that develop values such as cooperation, respect and tolerance. *“La educación (...) ha de basarse en una amistosa colaboración entre maestros y padres porque los alumnos tienen que ser siempre el centro de toda actividad escolar”* (Rudolf Steiner, 50's).

Finally, I would like to stand out the importance of art in the Waldorf-Steiner pedagogy. This method uses music, rhythms and art as learning and teaching strategies according to the idea

that children have to be happy and feel great during all the tasks to promote motivation and love for learning. This way, children can feel themselves in freedom to create and express their thoughts with neither competitive skills nor insistence to learn something that they don't care. Therefore, the evaluation is not competitive, because the kids can improve their abilities because they want to do it, not because it is an obligation.

“Un entorno nunca competitivo, creando un clima de colaboración, se anima a los niños a sentir satisfacción profunda por su trabajo bonito y bien realizado, estimulándoles a dar siempre lo mejor de sí mismos, valorando el esfuerzo individual, respetando su proceso evolutivo y atendiendo a sus necesidades de acuerdo al momento madurativo en que se encuentran” (Escuela Micael, Madrid).

However, there are some points of the theory that are difficult to be introduced in Spanish schools:

- Families' work: Nowadays in Spain, unfortunately, there are many families that don't take care about their children's education, because they are concentrated in their own life, far away from the schools. On the other side, there are families too worried about education, but still bear in mind the education they had had when they were children, which means these people are afraid of changes and new teaching methods.

Meanwhile, teachers and schools are not moving forward, as many families are not going to understand the new method and they won't want to cooperate with the school. For that reason, these ideals are impossible to be introduced if families don't want to participate in the educational work.

- Introduction of the method in every school: There are some teachers that don't understand -or they don't want to understand- these new points of view about education. Some teachers would like to use the Waldorf method, but some of them not, as it implies more formation and work in the school, and this is a job that they are not interested in doing.

In conclusion, I think that including this method as a global educational system would be the best way to change our schools and adapt them to children's life. However, this task is going to be hard, because Spanish society, in general, is not prepared to these changes and if people don't change their thoughts, schools can't change the system and methods.

3. New and outdated methods to teach a foreign language

Firstly, I would like to explain the most popular methods used nowadays in our schools:

The grammar-translation method: Translation and grammar knowledge are the most important points in this method, as it was created for the purpose of *“helping students read and appreciate foreign language literature”* (Information taken from Ferran Gayà, *“Universitat de les Illes Balears”* English teacher, 2013). Teachers provide students a huge list of bilingual vocabulary that they have to learn by heart and then they will be able to construct sentences with sense. Communication skills, pronunciation or contents' comprehension are not considered. Students have to develop the ability of reading and translation, but not the usage of the language. For that reason, it is said that this method is *“unnatural”* because *“the natural order of learning a language is listening, speaking, reading and writing”* (Information taken from Ferran Gayà, *“Universitat de les Illes Balears”* English teacher, 2013), and this method starts with reading and writing skills. Therefore, students that have learnt English by this method can't speak fluently or keep a natural conversation with a native person: first they have to think in their mother tongue, and then they have to translate it into the foreign language. It is a very hard job and it's impossible to speak naturally.

I think this is not the best way to learn and teach a foreign language, because as Jeremy Harmer says, *“language learning means acquiring certain skills, which can be learnt through practice and not by just memorizing rules”* (Information taken from Ferran Gayà, *“Universitat de les Illes Balears”* English teacher, 2013). Teachers should teach English as a tool to express yourself, to communicate with other people, and using this method is not the better way to get it. Grammar is important and necessary, but it is not the most important. First you have to speak, use and understand how the language works, and only then you should introduce grammar skills and try to improve linguistic knowledge. In addition, this method can be boring and not motivating for children, because some linguistics contents are difficult to understand and they make not sense to them. As a result, English lessons become a chaos and teachers are frustrated. Actually, many of them feel that do English lessons at school is a hard job (*“Never tell the children anything they can find out for themselves”* - Jesper. 1904).

The direct method: It is totally opposed to the grammar-translation method. Actually it is known as ‘anti-grammatical’ method. Teachers use it with the belief that the foreign language should be learnt by imitating the first language learning. Therefore knowing a language means

being able to speak it. In other words, the direct method uses the natural order for learning a language: listening, speaking, reading and writing in order to get a good oral proficiency and fluency. It was a revolutionary point of view about language teaching, as it was the first step to think in methods based on communicative skills.

However, there are some points that are not possible to apply, such as learning the second language as the mother tongue. That idea is impossible to carry out in schools, even in any English lesson, because when a child learns its first language, he develops the ability to create its own concept of the world, therefore, the ability to think, imagine and feel.

I think, it's impossible to get the same development level of a second language, as any human is going to create an own idea about the world and life generally, and this is going to occur in the mother tongue.

In conclusion, teaching a language means communication and this is a good approach to heed in English lessons, due to the fact that it develops listening and speaking skills and at the end there are reading and writing. That is the natural way for learning a language, even the mother tongue. However, a foreign language shouldn't be taught as the mother tongue, owing to the child will never be able to develop linguistic abilities as well as in L1 and that can frustrate him and even the teacher.

- Audio – lingualism (structuralism): This method is based on behaviorism and pattern practice, meaning that students have to repeat some behaviors and speaking skills to get to use them spontaneously. Consequently, it is also set up on spoken English, but opposite to the direct method. It is not based on vocabulary teaching, but some sentences and structures are presented to students and they have to repeat and practice them until they learn them and they can express by themselves fluently. Dialogues and role-plays are some of the most known activities carried out with this method.

This method is well-known in our schools too. Due to the fact that many teachers are not comfortable with the new methodologies based on freedom and they fell more confident with “*the linguistic restriction of such procedures*” (Richards, J. C. 1986) . Richards, J. C. (1986) included that the steps to carry out this method are “*repetition, inflection, replacement and restatement*”.

However, using this method means not contextualizing and as a result, it doesn't provide communication skills enough to speak fluently. Moreover, teachers that use this method avoid the mistakes, which are a very important part of children's development because *"learning from errors is a key part of the process of acquisition"* (Richards, J. C. 1986).

- Presentation, practice and production: This method is very similar to the structuralist point of view, but in this case, teachers use a context to introduce the sentences and basic structures. The first step is to present a picture chosen strategically for learning a specific vocabulary and structures, and then the teacher asks his pupils in order to have them guess the contents they are supposed to learn. Then, students have to practice the sentences by repetition in chorus and in pairs since the teacher is sure that the learning has been effective. Finally, children are expected to be able to use the new language and create their own sentences. In my opinion, this method can be useful at first steps of children learning, because they are learning some basic vocabulary and structures that can feel them more confident with the usage of foreign language. However, when students are confident and motivated enough, teachers should change the method because children will find the need to say many things and if they haven't learnt the structure before, they would be frustrated and boring.
- The communicative approach (Jeremy Harmer): This method places its emphasis on *"the significance of language rather than focusing only on grammar and vocabulary"*. It is introducing students in a real communicative environment, that is children can find the need to communicate and express themselves in English. Hence, the teacher must diversify the contexts, objectives and motivations frequently to achieve this necessity and to avoid children getting bored or not reaching the final goal. Therefore, the most important point in this theory is, as Jeremy Harmer said, *"Students should have a purpose for communicating"*.

The skills to practice with this method are *"drawing, acting out, listening, talking, reading or writing based on meaningful"* and have to be strategically chosen and prepared for children can get the objectives. Three types of activities can be carried out: problem-solving activities, interactive activities and creating activities. I think that it is useful and interesting to include this communicative need in our methodology, because children will try to speak and express themselves in English in a natural way. However, working in

groups or in pairs could be dangerous, as weaker pupils can feel lost and not be able to develop all their abilities in foreign language. Moreover, many students will feel unconfident with the usage of vocabulary, because they are not sure if they are expressing themselves correctly. And that means big problems with grammar skills in the future.

- Task – based language learning (TBLL): Using this method in an English lesson means children experimenting with the language in a real and natural context. Teachers must create the need to speak and communicate among them in the foreign language. Children have to experiment and analyze all the communicative situations with their store of knowledge, therefore the most important point of this theory is motivation for communication. In addition, teachers must select and adapt any source they can find interesting to create a useful material for pupils, even if they are not created to use it in English classrooms. Willis (1996) said that this method goes by four seasons: “*pre – task, task preparation, task realization and post task*”.

During the pre-task the teacher thinks and prepares the materials are going to be used during the following lessons and then children meet the materials, activating the language by a brainstorm. Then children have to prepare the language and the ideas using the words connected with the topic that they have learnt before (the brainstorm during the pre – task). When learners are prepared linguistically for the task, they will be able to produce or present their tasks and ideas. Finally, students can return to the material and try to go in depth and improve their knowledge about the topic or grammar structures.

I think that this method can be useful for children to improve their communication skills, because it allows them for communicate by freedom and in a natural context. This learning situation avoids embarrassment or scary behavior to speak in a foreign language. Therefore, children are more confident with their learnings and language fluency.

However, if teachers use this method they should plan every lesson accurately and keep in mind the space, because classes are usually limited or inflexible to changes. For that reason, working in little groups with many different materials, doing role – play activities or some dialogues could be a hard job for teachers. Furthermore, when students work in small groups or in pairs, some of them do not do anything during the lesson, because the others will do the work in anyway. That means, they are hiding learning or understanding issues that could be serious.

Secondly, the following methods are raising everyday in Spanish schools, although not all teachers agree with this methodology changes:

- Teaching a second language through contents: “*Learn as you use. Use as you learn. Not learn now and use later*”. Krashen thinks that learning a language is not studying it, but it is using it and real communication among children. I think this method can be useful in our schools for the following reasons:
 - If we use this programme we're going to keep in mind children's needs and interests and we will be able to adapt our method to their motivations' changes.
 - Children can use the language naturally and in a real context.
 - The meaning (comprehension) is more important than the spelling and grammar correction.
 - Children can get contents and language at the same time. (Joaquim Arnau. Teacher of developmental psychology and education. University of Barcelona).
- Language Integrated Project: In this project, the foreign language is integrated as a communicative tool, and not as an educational tool (curricular area). That means that any school subject and any content can be taught in English, in order to create a necessary communicative environment. This way, students will be able to speak fluently and they will feel confident and free enough to use the language. As Rosa María Ramírez Palou and Teresa Serra Santasusana say, “*La lengua ha de ser vivida por sus hablantes; con esto queremos decir que hemos de hacer cosas con la lengua. En la escuela este hacer cosas lleva a enseñar a aprender a conocer, a hacer, a ser*” (Arnau, J., & Téllez, G. L. Metodología en la enseñanza del inglés. 2001). The Language Integrated Project was introduced in Spanish schools the last academic year, but the experience wasn't as successful as it was expected to. I think the most important reasons of this failure were:
 - Not introducing it in all schools at the same time: Every school could choose how, when and which groups were going to use the project. Hence, there wasn't contents' homogeneity not only at schools but also in the educational community. Moreover, children were lost among many changes and they couldn't adapt themselves to a routine that help them to guide their learning – teaching process.

- Hostage of resources and teachers' formation: Carrying out the project accordingly, that is, with a real linguistic immersion, creating an English environment (“*los niños aprenderán en el uso y se aperibirán de ello si ven que hay personas que se comunican en inglés. Por esto, desde el primer momento, entran siempre profesoras a hacer las actividades en inglés*”). To get this environment, it is necessary to have a wide variety of resources that are not available in many schools, and besides a specific teacher’s formation that it is difficult to solve because there aren't enough tools. Consequently, this project provides a good approach for learning English by a natural way, but many resources and formation are necessary that are nowadays impossible to get, and additionally our educational system shouldn't suffer political variations. (Rosa María Ramírez Palou. Maestra y directora del Colegio Público Villa Olímpica de Barcelona; Teresa Serra Santasusana. Maestra y jefa de estudios del Colegio Público Villa Olímpica de Barcelona).
- Working through projects: This educational system started with the New School in the 20th century, and it was a revolutionary movement because they set up “*pedagogical ideas such as significant learning, globalization or diversity and investigation*”.

The final goal of working through projects in English lessons is that children will be able to use the foreign language in real and daily situations from their interests and motivations. This way, kids can experiment and investigate with English naturally, as the project is based on prior knowledge and experimentation. Moreover, the values worked through this method are democracy, mistakes as a tool for learning and dialogue to resolve conflicts.

I think that it is a good way to integrate English at schools, due to pupils can choose what and how to learn in freedom, and improve their creativity and motivation for learning as well. Teachers are guides and analysts of educational task. They have to be opened to changes and learning by mistakes and experimentation, due to it is necessary to be sure the method is going to work. However, the problem to introduce working through projects in our schools is that teachers do not always agree with these values and ideas, therefore trying to implement the method in every Spanish school at the same time and in the same way it is impossible. As I said before, I don't think applying a different system in each school is appropriate, as methodology heterogeneity is unfair and unsuitable. Eve-

rybody should have the same educational quality, it is only necessary motivational and vocational teachers. (Ana Soberón. Teacher of the school Arturo Soria, Madrid).

- Working by tasks: “*Los alumnos realizan tareas utilizando la lengua extranjera de forma receptiva y productiva*” (Sheila Estaire. Ex – directora de Treader Development Unit British Council. Madrid QUOTE? YEAR?). The needs to use the language are created by the task or the activity that can be about any subject or field of knowledge. Working by tasks means doing different activities by different ways (little groups, individually, in pairs or in class – group) to get a final goal. An issue is chosen by the pupils and the activities are programmed to get the final goal that children and teachers are interested in.

This way, the teacher must create the best activities to get the final goal and with the suitable strategies for working the linguistic and communicative abilities that are expected to be acquired. That is, pupils will learn about an interesting topic for them and at the same time they will acquire the communicative skills they are supposed to develop. Therefore, explanations about linguistic are avoided because children are using the language in a motivational activity. Consequently pupils and teachers need much time to reflect.

I believe it is a suitable way to introduce the foreign language, as kids will use English because they need it. Nevertheless, this method should be combined with other teaching strategies, owing to some abilities or competences can be difficult to be acquired. The teacher must pay attention to all the students, while doing the activities properly at the same time, which requires a big implication.

4. New theories about teaching language to visually impaired children

Firstly, it is necessary to keep in mind the educational needs that visually impaired or blind children can present during school term, because the first step is to adapt the method is going to be used in class to the students. Some strategies to adapt lessons to visually impaired children are:

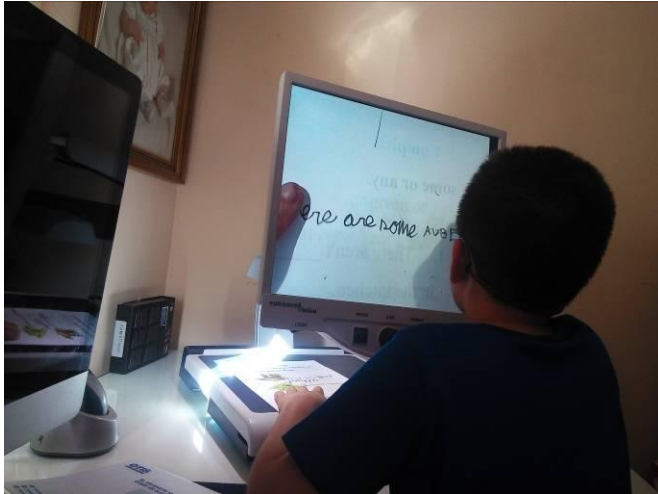
“Permitirle autonomía. No ayudarle si no lo necesita. Hacerle ver sus posibilidades reales. Una estimulación multisensorial, que permita y favorezca la utilización de todos los sentidos, sobre todo tacto y oído. Trabajar sobre objetos y situaciones de la vida real. Verbalizar todas las situaciones utilizando un lenguaje concreto”. (Pablo Martín Andrade, 2001).

Furthermore, keeping in mind some basic features of visually impaired children is important too. Teachers must consider that these students need much more time to do the tasks and activities, because their visual capacity is limited and they can't see the space and materials as something global. In this case the kid will look at the little parts to finally build the global concept. This implies some confusion among teachers because these children usually don't pay enough attention and are distracted, because they are lost during the class. For that reason, teachers might think that the child has development problems and even they can consider that it is a SEN (Special Education Needs) case.

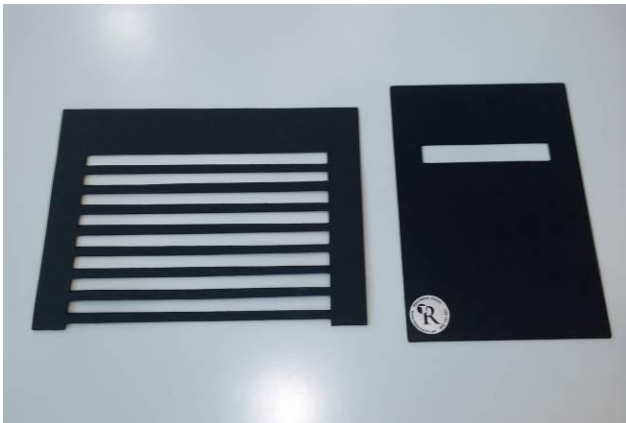
Therefore, teachers should help them to join the visual information with the language, that means, give a name to everything they see (*"dar nombre a lo que ven"*, Belkis León González).

Regarding environment features, it's important to consider the needs that the student has got during learning – teaching process, such as contrasts, illumination or glares. In addition, during the lessons teachers must keep in mind some accessibility strategies for getting the child in a comfortable learning environment. The most important are:

- The usage of the telescope to look at the board, or sitting the child the nearest to it.
- The assessment criteria that imply specific visual capacities, such as the use of a colour or choose the correct sentence and rewriting should be modified and adapted to the child's visual situation.
- Avoid changes in organization, not only of the areas, but also of the materials. The student has to feel confident about the location of materials and distribution of the classroom.
- New technologies are the best tool to support these pupils, because they provide children autonomy and independence in their tasks.
- It's important children know what's looking at in any moment, therefore teachers should tell them when it is necessary.
- Usage of specific materials, such as, a lectern for the nearest tasks, a tele-loupe that magnifies the text as large as the child needs, or a typo-scope, useful to continue reading lines. These are some examples:



Picture 1: 10 year old child using the tele - loupe. Photo taken by Eva Mateos



Picture 2: Tiposcopio. Photo from: <http://www.qvision.es/blogs/javiersebastian/2010/12/22/ayudas-noopticas/>

Finally, Gabriela Rozzeli points out the basic ideas to adapt the materials in the class. To choose the colours and contrasts in the texts is essential, and the criterion used is usually minimum brightness and maximum contrast. The page has to be as simple as possible, with no ornaments. Also, it is recommended the usage of a black pencil with soft tip, and the drawings or pictures to colour must have well – defined lines.

From these ideas, the methodology should be based on the dialogue and communication above visual stimulus, and the usage of pictures, photos or drawings to get the pupils used to new vocabulary, should be replaced by touchable materials. This way, the visually impaired or blind child will be able to identify the word meanings, using the same competences as his classmates.

Therefore, the idea that children create his own world conception from pictures, as David Vale and Anne Feunteun say, “*así los niños crecen con la expectativa de que el mundo en que vivirán*

será en un mundo de imágenes. Están acostumbrados a recibir apoyo visual constante en todo lo que concierne a la comunicación” (David Vale y Anne Feunteun, 1995), makes no sense with blind children, because they get their world conception from sounds, noises and haptic sensing.

As Pablo Martín Andrade thinks, the best strategy for learning a foreign language is the interaction and real communication among pupils. By this way, the visually impaired child wouldn't find troubles at English lessons, owing to speaking comprehension is more important than written expression.

In conclusion, there is not a specific method adapted to visually impaired children. The teacher has to adapt his job to the child's specific needs, keeping in mind the features that children could have and the classroom strategies to give the child a comfortable learning – teaching process. That implies:

- Materials adaptations.
- Avoid modifications in classroom organization.
- Curriculum adaptations when it is necessary.
- To know everything about visual health of the student and his way to learn.

b) Analysis of the current educational outlook

1. Methodologies used in English lessons.

Nowadays in our schools the most popular methods are the Grammar-Translation Method, which is carried out with a text book, and the Audio-Lingualism (Structuralism), based on behaviorism and pattern repetitions. However, new theories and methods are becoming to succeed, meaning that teachers are more motivated and confident to change their teaching strategies. I've visited some schools, where different methodologies from the traditional ones are being used. This is a brave decision because teachers are trying to change something in our educational system and this is the way that it must be taken. However, these methodology changes are not taking part in English, meaning that, they only apply the new methods in core subjects, therefore we have the same problems in the at English lessons. In many schools the methods of working through projects and working by tasks are used because some teachers, the younger ones and the most involved realized that traditional methodologies are not useful and children don't learn as well they did before. For that reason, they decided to study more about new theories and changes in our society that concern in the educational outlook.

Some teachers in personal interviews about this topic told me “*els mètodes tradicionals ja no funcionen i ningú el pot negar, per tant, perquè no provar experiències noves? Què pots perdre?*” (Carme Coreja, Mata de Jonc's teacher). Specially this teacher explained to me that in the school where she works they are using the Montessori's idea of environments joined to working by workshops, and the experience is becoming more and more successful everyday. She thinks that these teaching methods are working because they respect the learning process of every child, meaning that not all the kids learn at the same time and in the same way, and that the most important task of a teacher is to respect the pupils.

However, these ideas are not applied at English lessons, because the teacher is not formed enough to carry them out. Moreover, using these methods means to have a huge work team, many resources and time to spend in it, but it shouldn't be a drawback. In my opinion, the biggest problem for applying these ideals in our classrooms is the lack of motivation from teachers. As Carme Coreja told me “*T'ho has de creure i has de voler*”. For that reason a joined work team is needed where every teacher wanted to do it and everybody is implied by the same way. In addition, some teachers are afraid and uncomfortable to use new methods because they are not feel-

ing confident with strategies that give them different answers every day, meaning that, every child is going to answer and learn with each material in different ways, and these situations can produce worries in teachers.

On the other hand, it is necessary to talk about new technologies in our classrooms. Every school has digital boards, computers and many useful resources, but unfortunately most teachers don't use them. At most, they switch on the digital board to show the digital textbook, which is not the best usage for the resource.

In conclusion, I could see changes not only in teacher's mind, but also in the point of view of the current educational system. Teachers are becoming aware that classroom problems come from their own task, because it is not adapted neither to children needs nor to real society.

Therefore, this awareness of change and the usage of new methods is appearing in many schools, because there are brave teachers that tried to change and adapt their task, and the results are successful, but, as stated above, these methodologies changes are not taking part in the English subject.

2. Troubles we can find in the classrooms.

Nowadays in our schools we can find many unmotivated teachers, because they can't do the lessons as well as they would like to. Therefore, they feel frustrated and lost and these feelings are transmitted to children. For that reason, I think the first problem we can find in classrooms is the unsuitable attitude of teachers to create a motivational environment for learning. Also, most of them are not formed enough and they don't know how to apply new methods. They prefer to use the same pedagogic strategies every year instead of trying to change and adapt their work to the changes and children's real needs. As Christopher Clouder said, *“Our educational practices have to be thought as something new, trying not to look to the past, because we can be influenced by the anachronistic methods”* (Social and emotional education. An international analysis. Fundación Botín Report, 2011).

Due to, the fact that children are bored and not interested in the contents that are not adapted to their motivations and curiosity. I think teachers should try to know more about their pupils and adapt their strategies and methods to children's reality and context. Actually, in a per-

sonal interview to a ten year old kid, he stated that he only has fun during break time, and during the classes he is bored (*“Sí, es que las clases son un rollo”*).

This classic statement shows us that children have fun when they feel free and not controlled at any movement as it is done at classrooms, where they have to be sitting down on their seats and listening to teacher's explanations about things that maybe they do not care about. That means the space is not suitable, specially for the earliest ages, because they can't move freely, they have to be quiet, listen and do the activities on their desks.

Furthermore, there are teachers that don't use the new technologies or want to learn how to use them in class. Children are immersed in the technology age, actually our society depends of new technologies, therefore, teachers should include these new social features into classrooms, because it is a children reality and the school should reflect it to show them how to live in the real world.

Finally, I think that there is an obsession at schools with getting the objectives defined on *“Currículum d'Educació Primària de les Illes Balears”*, but there is not an awareness about contents consolidation, meaning that it is more important to achieve all the goals and contents than learning them. (Children know many things but they don't know about anything).

3. Troubles we can find in English lessons.

Apart of the classroom problems mentioned in the section before, in the English lessons I could find other specific troubles that are very common in Spanish schools:

- Children don't speak in English, because Spanish is the lingua franca, even in English lessons. Many teachers explain and speak to children in their mother tongue instead of English. If we don't speak with them, they are not going to do it on their own. It is important not to forget that teachers are models for kids and the teacher shouldn't ask kids to speak in the foreign language if they don't set an example.
- Learning a language becomes learning grammar and linguistic skills. Some contents are abstract and difficult to understand for children, because they are far away from kid's linguistic knowledge development. As Chomsky said in his theories in 50's and 60's, *“grammar was too complex to be learned naturally and that language requires mental processing for learners to be able to attain linguistic competence”* (Hinkel, E., & Fotos,

S. New Perspectives on grammar teaching in second language classrooms. 2002). For example, the final -s in the 3rd person of singular in present simple is a content that appears since 3rd grade of primary, but they are not learning it because they are not using it naturally (they use it correctly if they learn the expressions by heart). Actually, when these children get to the high school they don't write the -s, meaning that they still don't understand the content. For that reason I think the biggest problem is that students can't find sense in this kind of concepts, hence they get bored and are demotivated during English lessons.

- Classroom control. Some teachers are afraid of chaos and they prefer to use traditional methodologies, because it is easier to manage the classroom. They don't feel confident enough to try to use new strategies and change their educational practices, since they are more comfortable to control the classroom and kids learnings. I think this is a big mistake because language is communication, children must talk each other and they have to feel in freedom to express themselves. Teachers should keep in mind that learning a language is not doing activities and exercises about some grammar and vocabulary skills individually and in silence, because by this way, students are not using the language and this learning has not a clear educational sense. Hence, don't being obsessed with the silence at schools is the first step for changing, since children have to be communicative people, as an essential skill to survive in our current society.

4. Troubles visually impaired children can find in English lessons.

Apart of the troubles we can find in English lessons, visually impaired children are immersed in specific problems. I think the most important is the excess of usage of visual stimulus as basic tools for teaching new vocabulary. Teachers must be aware that these children can't see the pictures as well as their classmates, even if they are sitting near to the teacher or they have the images on their desks. For that reason these children feel lost and they are demotivated during English lessons. They can't participate in many activities or they don't feel confident enough to do it, because they need much more time to look at the picture, analyze it and create the concept.

Furthermore, there is an obsession with the spelling mistakes. From the second cycle of primary in every unit children are expected not to make written mistakes neither in vocabulary

nor in grammar skills. I think writing in English properly is a very difficult task, because the phonemes do not match written spellings and many children are not prepared to understand these linguistic troubles. A visually impaired child has got even more problems in this issue. He has to exert himself more than the others, because he has to read slower, keeping his eyes on the text and read word by word, and then remember how to write it. After all of this, if he has a spelling mistake, he has to compare the words letter by letter. This is a hard job and I think not necessary. Actually a 10 year old kid with 30% of sight told me that English lessons at school were speaking classes but then they should do written exams with no mistakes (*“y además nos quita un punto por falta y a mi me cuesta fijarme en todas las palabras. Así que intento aprendérmelas de memoria”*). Teachers must correct some spelling mistakes, but not everything and not expect pupils to write perfectly, because their brain development is not prepared to do it in a comprehensive way.

Another big problem is the teacher's rapidity to explain some new words or structures. Children haven't got time enough to do all the activities, because they need to stop and look at the pictures to identify what is it and then remember the word in English, and finally write it with no spelling mistakes. It is obvious that they can't do it as fast as their classmates, therefore, coaches should keep in mind that these kids need more time to do an activity or exam and they have to allow them this extra time. Actually, all ONCE's teachers interviewed are agree with the same statement:

“No se enteraban de lo que se estaba hablando (...) No comprendo cómo una lengua ha de apoyarse tanto en la visión, cuando un lenguaje es escuchar y comunicación”.

For that reason, many of these children fail English subject, and some teachers decide that the solution is reducing contents, but I think this is a wrong decision, because their troubles are not about capacity or abilities, they only need adapted material and more time. That means, evaluation criteria should be adapted instead of the curriculum contents, advice given by ONCE's teachers. Most teachers think that these professionals only go to schools to help children one or two hours every week and that is their work. However, they also go to schools to give information and tools for adapting their lessons to children's needs and for being aware about the troubles they can find in the classroom, as an ONCE's teacher told me: *“nuestro objetivo es ir poco tiempo y que el alumno pueda desenvolverse como los demás en el aula sin la necesidad de tener a ningún profesional que le atienda”*.

c) The new theory

1. Investigations' conclusions

After all the investigation I think that our methodology knowledge has not progressed enough, because now we are slowly introducing theories from the beginnings of 20th century in our schools (Montessori), as our educational system is out-dated. This situation stops investigations about the issue and that means difficulty to improve our educational task. Therefore, most teachers are using the same pedagogic strategies as twenty years ago (Grammar-Translation Method, audio-lingualism and presentation, practice and production method). Seeing that, English lessons, and generally schools, are not adapted to children's interests and ways to learn and our educational system is immersed in a frustrated and demotivating environment for both children and teachers.

However, in some Spanish schools new approaches and methods have been introduced, such as working through projects or working by tasks. That means we are ready for changes and we should continue by this way to get a global improvement of the educational system and get out from this frustrated and demotivating environment. On the other hand, there are many methods and all can be useful by some way. That means, there aren't good or bad pedagogic strategies; teachers should know how and when use each methodology.

Keeping in mind the advantages and disadvantages of the newest and old-fashioned educational theories should allow teachers to create a wide variety of resources and strategies that they can use when it is necessary. Therefore, classes shouldn't be taught only through one single method, and teachers should have clear their educational approach and adapt their pedagogic strategies to children and everyday situations, consequently to their ideals and advantages and disadvantages of the methods they have already known.

I've learnt that there aren't specific methods to teach visually impaired children. The teachers' work is adapting the materials and assessment criteria, keeping in mind the features and problems that these students can find at school. However, I think, there are some points that are necessary to keep in mind in our educational practices, which are going to be positive for visually impaired children:

- More communicative lessons and less visual classes. Learning a language doesn't mean only analyzing pictures and learning the words, it means speaking and using the language in real contexts too.
- If teachers hold their educational approach in every class and adapt the methods and pedagogic strategies to the students, the troubles aren't going to be obvious.
- It is necessary that teachers are motivated and aware of their own formation. They should know about how visually impaired children learn and about specific materials they need to use in class. Therefore, they should search, investigate and ask to specific professionals to create a global knowledge.

Finally, this investigation has been useful to create my own approach for teaching English. I have been able to give specific features of each method I was interested in and to transmit them to my new methodology. I think this is the first step every teacher should do before educational practices, because this knowledge give confidence and new points of view about our current educational outlook. Then, teachers will be able to learn from experiences and they can adapt their theories and strategies at any children need.

2. Analysis' conclusions

After the analysis of the current educational outlook I can say that there are big problems in our classrooms that we should try to solve as fast as possible. These troubles are present in Spanish schools, because teachers are not brave enough to change the situation and they can't believe in themselves, hence they are demotivated and in a frustrating environment.

This situation implies serious problems such as, the educational practices are not adapted to children needs or interests, and therefore, they are boring and demotivated in class. Pupils don't want to know about grammar skills, they want to be able to talk and teachers don't create the communicative need in them. For that reason, English lessons are immersed in a chaos environment or become classes about grammar and vocabulary repetitions, which in any case makes not sense for children, and they can't enjoy learning a foreign language.

Also, if we join together all these troubles to the specific problems of visually impaired children in class, we will find pupils completely lost and frustrated, because English lessons are not adapted to them at all. Textbooks, pictures and exams are not the best tools to learn for them, because they have to do a superhuman effort to follow the class and teacher's explanation (Q:

“Entonces a la hora de seguir la clase, ¿puedes seguir el libro y a la profesora bien?”; A: “A veces me cuesta porque algunas cosas no las consigo leer bien”¹

Teachers try to solve the situation by adapting the curriculum contents but this is not the best way, due to their problems are not coming from knowledge capacities or abilities. The adaptations should be done in the assessment criteria.

On the other hand, another big problem in our schools is some teachers' fear of introducing new methodologies or pedagogic strategies. Using a different way to teach always scares teachers, because teachers don't know the children's answer, if it is going to work or if they are going to be able to control the situation. These thoughts appear because teachers are not confident about the usage of the new methods and they think the class is going to be a chaos and useless. But in my opinion this is a wrong point of view about education, because as teachers we have to learn from mistakes and experiences. We have to improve everyday to get a better educational system for our children, that means to adapt our work to them and not the opposite.

However, although that is the global situation in our country, we can find changes in some Spanish schools, that have included Montessori's and Waldorf's methods as the base of their educational practices. It is only introduced in the core subjects and I think the next step is to implement it in the rest of areas, even English. That means that there are teachers aware about school problems and they are brave enough to try to change our current educational outlook. But we should try to introduce these ideals and awareness as something global at schools.

In conclusion, improving our educational system is possible. Teachers only have to change their minds and points of view about educational skills and be aware about real problems in our classrooms and schools.

¹ See appendix 1: Interviews (47 – 54)

3. Suggestions for improvement.

The first step to improve the teachers' task during English lessons is to break with the fighting between communicative and grammar methods. Teachers shouldn't be related to only one method, as I said before; there aren't good or bad methodologies, it all depends on their application in classroom. This way, to heed different strategies and to choose the best one for every educational moment is the most useful approach to adapt teachers' task to pupils. Consequently, it is necessary to be clear and confident with the educational ideas and to be able for adapting pedagogic knowledge to each situation and create a comfortable learning environment.

That means not being afraid about changing methods and use new strategies and this is only possible by trying. Curiosity and investigation should be the most important nouns for teachers, as they are working with children that are living in an ever-changing society and they have a big capacity of adaptation to any context and environment, they change accordingly with the society.

In addition, reorganizing spaces and classrooms is important too. Schools ought to avoid the five hours of children sitting down on their seats listening to the teacher. They are kids, and they need to move and it should be respected. It is not necessary to be in silence, sitting down and listening for learning, it can be done by a freedom exploration and investigation, which implies freedom of movement. English lessons, or any language class, must be carried out in a communicative way, where students can feel free to express themselves naturally. Hence, a foreign language class completely in silence where everybody is sitting down doing individual work makes no sense neither for teachers nor for kids. Finally, another point to heed for improving pedagogic task is not to be obsessed with evaluation. The most important is kids can learn and use the language properly; it doesn't matter the way they are doing it, while they are using the language they are learning and achieving the real goals. An exam is not the only way to value kids' learnings, because doing some activities and exercises correctly as a textbook says doesn't mean they know the language and far from being to use it. Therefore, teachers should observe and analyze the real progress and development of each student individually.

In conclusion, teachers must consider the different methodologies and strategies that they know to be able to adapt their task at any educational situation and group of pupils, keeping in mind their pedagogic approach. Learning a language ought to be a communicative skill, hence,

to be in silence and quietly in a seat besides doing an exam as an evaluation of children's knowledge does not make sense. Therefore, accomplishing this approach means teachers have to be aware that they are not only working to teach, but also to learn. This is the real process of teaching: learning happens when everybody learns from everybody.

4. New methodology suggestions.

After all the investigation and analysis I suggest a new methodology based on the approach of children's freedom, happiness and motivation for learning. For that reason, the first step for children learning is the development of curiosity. Kids are going to learn about they want, this will increase the motivation and finally they will love learning (Waldorf's ideals). Therefore, the human development adaptation is considered (Rudolf Steiner's theory), because everything is going to be adapted to every child. Pupils are free to explore in an environment created specifically for them and they can find different materials to investigate and learn whatever they feel or need to. This way they are educating themselves with neither pressure nor obligations (Montessori's thoughts).

The teacher is going to guide the child and to take care about his feelings and interests. Therefore, the professional has to analyze carefully all the situations and movements in class and to adapt everything for creating an environment that allows children to be curious. Furthermore, children can learn with all their senses, because they will have a wide variety of materials that can be handle with all the senses, not only with sight (text books, flashcards, etc.). Consequently, visually impaired students won't have any problem in lesson's development, as they would choose activities that don't hinder their learning process because of their disability.

Finally, the evaluation is going to be carried out in a natural way, meaning that, children will be aware about their own learnings and they will be able to evaluate themselves. Moreover, the teacher is not going to be obsessed with the contents' acquisition, because the most important is the individual progress of each child and the improvement of the usage of English during all the lessons.

In conclusion, the approach of the new methodology is based on the creation of a specific environment for children where they will be allowed to be curious, to investigate and to experiment with different materials chosen strategically for building learnings.

On the other hand, using this approach in English lessons, means following these educational practices:

- Using the language to create an English environment: That means avoiding the mother tongue at English time and using the foreign language as the lingua franca. Also, the classroom should be immersed in an English context, meaning that, culture, language and traditions must be included in teacher's and children's tasks. This way, pupils can feel the necessity and motivation to speak in English, because they want to be understood and get a successful communication.
- No teaching by basic skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking): The “*Curriculum d'Educació Primària de les Illes Balears. Primera llengua estrangera: anglès*” is organized by basic skills of learning. There are four big contents block:
 1. “*Comprensió de textos orals*” (Listening).
 2. “*Producció de textos orals: expressió i interacció*” (Speaking)
 3. “*Comprensió de textos escrits*” (Reading).
 4. “*Producció de textos escrits*” (Writing).

And in these blocks there are specific vocabulary and grammar contents that have to be carried out by any school in Balearic Islands. Therefore, teachers are required to use these skills with the specific vocabulary and grammar structures. However, teachers should be able to introduce these abilities by a natural way. That means, if students use the language as a communication tool, they will work all the contents in the different skills, because the language requires the development of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Also, it is important to start (the youngest kids) with listening and speaking activities, as children should get used to the foreign language before start reading and writing.

- Freedom for speaking and reading (increasing the curiosity): Children will be allowed to choose what to talk and read about. They are learning, therefore, let them to decide what they want to discover, keeping the human curiosity. The foreign language practice must be done by a natural way and that implies teachers have to be confident and believe in what are they doing. Teachers have to consider pupils' interests and create the texts and materials from their motivations and not to force them to read about issues that they are not interested in. Furthermore, if a student starts to talk in English about a topic not relat-

ed with the issue practiced at the moment, don't stop him. Let's listen to his ideas and maybe we find a new theme to discuss about.

- Variety of materials that children can use as they want (sensory education): In the classroom, by setting an English environment, teachers give children a wide variety of materials to use the language and be communicative. These will be made to develop any of the five human senses; hence, visually impaired children won't find problems during the lessons, since they can choose the best way to learn for them. Boys will be free to choose any material and investigate experiment and discover with it. The teacher should guide them during their learning process and pay attention to “learning opportunities”. They should give feedbacks individually and in big group when it is considered a new interesting knowledge.

Finally, to carry out the lessons using those pedagogic ideas, it is recommended to follow these steps:

1. Present a project (Working through projects). The first step is doing a brainstorm about issues according to pupils' interests. By this way, we are going to choose a motivational topic for them, increasing the curiosity and the wonder of learning.
Then, the teacher must adapt the idea to real children's needs, which implies analyzing the group (level, motivations, troubles, etc).
When the idea about the topic is clear and it is ready to be carried out, the final goal of the project is explained and it is always kept in mind to hold the motivation. That means, the teacher has to repeat the final goal in every starting class, avoiding pupils forget the reason about doing the plan, and be lost on their learnings.
Finally, when the group analysis is done, the interests' brainstorm and the final goal is clear and students are motivated, it is the moment to create the environment in the classroom and immerse the children into the topic.
2. Environment and materials exploring. Once the environment is created according to the topic, children will be free to explore and investigate, and to get used to it. This is going to increase the motivation and curiosity for the topic. When kids get comfortable with the environment, the teacher will give them different materials adapted to their needs, mean-

ing that they are going to meet the topic by the usage of many materials that can be manipulated in different ways and with all the humans senses (sensory education), therefore, visually impaired students will not find any problems.

There won't be limits to choose and explore materials, because the objective is finding the best way for learning to them. Children will play, investigate and learn how to use these materials, due to later they will work with them.

3. Carrying out the project working by tasks (workshops). At this point children are used to the new materials, they will start working in pairs or alone in workshops using those tools. There will be a specific space to organize the workshops by levels. This establishment will be explained carefully and will not become altered even if there were any troubles to find the activities. Working by tasks means children will be able to use the language in many ways (speaking, listening, reading, even writing in the oldest levels) while they are learning everything about the topic of the project and they are getting the final goal step by step.

Pupils are going to be free to choose the task to do, but there is only one condition: doing the activity has to mean a challenge for the child. That means that they have to be aware about their level, abilities and capacity. Besides, they will be responsible of who are they working with (students can decide who to work with or to learn alone).

At the end of the class, the teacher will gather the pupils and they will talk in big group about the learnings and they will try to find the common points. Consequently, they are going to clarify the contents in a natural way (they want to do it) and to be aware about their own progress too.

4. Getting the final goal. At the end, when students have learnt everything about the topic working by tasks and with the specific materials, we will draw conclusions in big group and every child will be allowed to explain their learnings and conclusions about the issue. They will be free to choose how to show them (expositions, song creations, individual tasks such as writings or drawings, etc). Like this, children can evaluate themselves and teachers too, owing to the fact that everybody is learning at the same time, and this is the real teaching-learning process.

Eventually, teachers will be able to see the language progress of children individually and their grade of implication in the project at the same time. For that reason the assessment criteria will be different in each kid and is going to be heed the usage of language, implication and individual progress.

d) Usage of the new method

1. Teaching units and lesson planning.

Different projects are presented in each cycle of primary and a description about how to carry out with them in a classroom using the educational approach explained before.

- 1st cycle: Project we cook!

An example of a project for 1st cycle can be about food and everything related with it. The introduction of the topic that is, turning on the curiosity and motivation will be from the TV program Masterchef Junior, and the final goal will be becoming the best cook in the school! The environment would be in a kitchen with a fridge full of food and basic cooking utensils. Children will be able to explore and to try to guess how to use the different materials.

During the workshops they will learn all about food (names, smells, tastes, textures...) and how to cook, including the use of cooking utensils and recipes. At the end of every class, children will explain to all the classmates which new food they know, what is it like and how it is cooked (recipes). Pupils can choose the activity depending of the level they want challenge and the sense they want to use for learning:

- Related with the olfactory sensitivity. Children have to speak about the different smells of food. They will have different levels of what to talk about.
- To develop the tactile sense. They will have food material made with goma eva or clothes and they have to identify them. Reading and listening activities will be given to work on it.
- Related with hearing sensitivity. Students listen to some recipes or food features and they have to guess.
- Learning by tasting, means to identify food with the real taste of it.

Once they know everything about food, they will do a recipe (project's final goal). In little groups, they will do a recipe that has already been done or one invented by themselves and their

new experiences. Finally, as in Masterchef Junior, all the meals will be tasted by a jury who decides who is the winner.²

- 2nd cycle: Project wildlife!

In second cycle, pupils can be introduced in the amazing world of the wildlife. They will learn everything about the wild animals and their habitats. Starting the project is going to be by the observation and exploration of three different environments:

- The jungle: Kids find out about the animals live there, how they live and how is their habitat like.
- The ocean: They will know everything about fish, the sea and marine plants such as corals or seaweeds.
- The forest: Which animals live in the forest, how they live and how is their habitat like.

Students will be able to explore and investigate with all the materials specially created for learning all about these habitats, and then in a big group children will explain their experiences and opinions about each environment. After the conclusion, it will be explained the final goal: Being wildlife's explorers.

During the workshops, the class will be divided into three groups, one for each environment and they will become experts in one habitat. At the end of every class, all the groups will explain to the others what they have learnt about the jungle, ocean and forest. Although this division, they will continue working in pairs or alone into their group.

Students will choose how to work with the information of their environment. Depending of their level, their way for learning and the group organization, they will have activities related with:

- Development of hearing sense: Activities about animals and environments sounds as identifying feature of the habitat.
- Tactile activities, where the kids will have different textures that identify an animal.
- Learning from the smell: To recognize the smell of animals and environments.

² See appendix 2: Teaching Units (64 – 69)

Finally, the three groups will record a video, such as explorers do, explaining and showing everything they know about their environment. They will share it with the classmates and all the class is going to discuss and give personal opinions about each video.

This way children are going to learn animals and environment vocabulary in a natural and communicative context, added to learning with all their senses.³

- 3rd cycle: Universe project!

Finally, for 3rd cycle it can be interesting a project about the universe, where pupils will learn all about planets and galaxies.

To introduce the topic, that means awaken pupils' curiosity, students will go into the classroom and they will explore it until they realize they are in a huge rocket. This motivational moment is the opportunity to start a brainstorm about the universe and analyze the prior knowledge of the students. Later, the final goal is presented, which is creating a galaxy in little groups, that means to travel in a rocket and to find out everything about the planets and stars in Milky Way and about other galaxies, working alone, in pairs and in small cooperatives groups at the same time.

During the workshops, children will have three big spaces organized by levels as well, and they will be free to choose the activity they want to do depending of their level and way of learning:

- Hearing development activities, such as listening songs or short stories about the planets.
- Touching exercises: Students will touch different forms of planets and stars.
- Related to smells, where children can match and identify some specific smells to the planets' features or galaxies.

Finally, pupils will show and explain to their classmates what have they learnt about the stars, planets or galaxies, therefore the knowledge about the topic and the environment is going to be complete.

Once they know everything about the Milky Way and galaxies students will deal with the final goal by creating their own galaxy, which includes basic features of stars and planets.

³ See appendix 2: Teaching units (70 – 75)

To finish the project, they will show to all the school their galaxies with a little explanation of them.⁴

2. Handmade materials adapted to visually impaired children

All the materials will be adapted to visually impaired children. Everything is going to be written in braille or with a big size letter. Almost, it is necessary to use specific materials, most of them handmade, to carry out the different projects explained before. The following instructions are some guides to use and create them:

- Touch materials: Some touch materials that can be useful to create scholar stuff adapted to visually impaired children are:
 - “*Eva foam*”, because it is malleable and difficult to break. The shapes made with it must be clear and well – defined and it is recommended to write the name in braille.
 - Different kind of papers: There is a stick plastic and sheer paper prepared to be used on a Perkins that can be useful to write the names of the different objects made with “Eva foam” or clothes. It is necessary to avoid the usage of thinner paper, because it can not be used with the Perkins. Instead of the typical sheets we can use cardboards that are much stronger.
 - Different kind of clothes to make different textures, which kids can distinguish and identify concepts by this distinction.
 - Wikki stix: They are threads that can be manipulated as you need and it can be stick too. They are useful to create some shapes with relief or even to create crosswords.

It is important to keep in mind that the objects must be as realistic as possible and everything you can see with your eyes must be adapted to be tangible (their hands are for them like our eyes are for us) to create a better understanding world.

- Materials to use olfactory sensitivity

⁴ See appendix 2: Teaching units (75 – 80)

About the smells, it is necessary to give some real odours from the nearest context of the child to create a comfortable and knowing environment. Almost, the smells in the classroom shouldn't be neither strong (avoid pungent odours) nor changeable, due to that can confuse the children about some changes that they are not realizing about.

If we want to use different smells in some activities we should take care with the organization and the space to do the exercise, because these must be placed in distinguished areas to not mix them.

- Materials for hearing

Listening is a very important quality of visually impaired children, therefore must be educated accordingly.

The sounds must be clear and not confusing. If they are working individually, the usage of headphones is a good strategy to keep the concentration and to prevent possible sound disorts.

It is important to change the voice and the tone in specific situations, such as, when it is an annoying moment or when there are two or more characters talking in a specific activity (the teacher makes the different voices to distinguish them).

Finally, in the classroom shouldn't be strident sounds and the activities don't ought to create too much noise, because that environment create confusion and disorientation in blind children.

3. Reasons why my theory can work.

It is obvious that the methods used nowadays in schools are not working as it is expected to, because children after all are not speaking in the foreign language and many English lessons are becoming chaotic and with a hostage of educational sense.

My theory tries to avoid this big problem for many reasons. Firstly, it is based on children motivations and interests, besides the curiosity as the first step for learning. Hence, kids will want to learn and they are going to be implied and participatory in English lessons.

Furthermore, pupils are free to choose the way for learning because they will work by tasks and with all their senses. Therefore, they won't have troubles neither to develop the activities in class nor to progress in their teaching – learning process.

Another important point to keep in mind for doing English lessons successfully is to be in an English environment. During the lesson they will feel the necessity to speak in the foreign language, that is, to get used to in the usage of the language by a natural way not by an obligation, which has not sense for children.

I have seen the useful of this English environment at some schools that have got a dialogue assistant who only speaks in English. Children try to communicate with him and at those moments kids are learning the foreign language, because they are using it as a necessity. Working in environments means to avoid being quiet or like statues. To be sitting down during hours is frustrating for children. With this methodology they don't need to be in a specific seat, because they have to investigate and explore in freedom. Consequently they can move into the classroom when they think it is necessary. Actually, I could observe in some schools that children after Physical Education or break time, that is, when they run and move, they are expected to sit down, relax and listen. This situation it is obvious not going to happen, therefore, why being obsessed with the seats control? It is possible to do other activities that don't imply be sitting down. I think when they are moving and activating the bodies, their brains are stimulated for learning too. Teachers should take advantage of these circumstances.

In addition, with this method kids are not obligated to learn anything they don't want to. In my short experience I have realized that children, and people generally, hate obligations, as it is something you must do, not something you want to, and it is always funnier and more interesting doing things we like. If they don't want to learn it because it is not necessary for them, they are not going to do it. Therefore, let's start knowing about their pursuits and likes to adapt our task to them.

Finally, it is important that teachers believe in their work, for that reason they need to have a clear approach, which is going to be always present, to be motivated and to be brave for changing to adapt their task to any educational situation and group of children. Consequently, they have to feel sure and confident about their task, the activities they prepare and goals to achieve. Only by this way, pupils are going to believe in teachers, hence, they respect their work and they will take advantage of the activities and lessons.

CONCLUSIONS

Doing this dissertation it has been interesting and useful, due to the fact that I have learnt about different educational approaches and methodologies that I didn't know about. I have also realized that we are not aware enough about the problems found in our current educational system.

I have investigated about many pedagogic ideas and theories that I had learned about during my degree, such as Waldorf's and Montessori's ideology. However, I have gone in depth and I have realized that these theories need modifications to be applied in our educational system. In addition, to start using them nowadays means that we are out-dated about methodologies, as the ones we are using appeared in the 20's and 30's.

On the other hand, I have been reading and analyzing by my own observation and interviews with professionals in the area about the methods used in our schools in English lessons and I have come to a conclusion: there is a big war between grammar-translation and communicative methods and we should break down with this situation and introduce innovations at schools, although the bravest are trying to do it. But, I don't think there is one method that always works. It is important to know about them, advantages and disadvantages, and keep them in mind for creating your own methodology from a clear approach according to your own ideas about education. This way our task is going to be adapted to kids' necessities, hence, visually impaired children wouldn't have any problem in English lessons.

Nevertheless, this is not the reality of our schools. Children are bored in class because the teachers' task is not adapted to their motivations and interests. That is, the methodologies are not suitable with neither society changes nor children needs. Actually, learning English means learning grammar, which makes no sense for kids, because they can't see the practical usage of a language, they are learning linguistic concepts that are far away from their reality and nearest context.

Moreover, the mother tongue is used as the lingua franca that is not getting children used to listening to English. Besides, lessons are based on an excessive use of pictures and visual stimulus, and generally, there is an obsession with spelling mistakes at schools. For these reasons visually impaired children are lost, hence teachers ought to heed that these pupils need more time to do the activities and adapted materials according to their needs. That means, they do not need

curricular adaptations, such as many teachers think, but it is necessary to make assessment criteria adjustments.

Consequently, I have decided to create a method based on the investigations and analysis conclusions by trying to solve troubles I found in our current educational outlook. The end result is a methodology based on curiosity as first step for learning and freedom to explore environments, materials and information from the nearest context of kids.

The best way for carrying out with the method in English lessons is by a communicative approach, that is to create an specific environment (interesting for students) where they need to use the foreign language by a natural way. For that reason, teaching by basic skills makes no sense, as our natural language learning starts with listening and speaking familiarization and later we are prepared for reading and writing.

Furthermore, working this way means not sitting down for five hours. Children need to move for exploring and investigating the materials and environments. Besides, if they use the foreign language they need to talk, hence it is absurd to keep silence in an English class. Therefore, using this method means avoiding visually impaired children problems, but we have to consider that it is necessary to educate all the senses, that is giving them a variety of materials adapted to their specific needs.

That implies a diversification of the evaluation tools, because if we are teaching in different ways to adapt learning to each child, we should vary the assessment criteria. Additionally only an exam is not significative enough for assessing the real language knowledge of a child. There are many factors that can provoke stress, tension or distraction on children, thus getting bad results in an exam, but it doesn't mean that a child doesn't know the established contents. For that reason, the evaluation ought to be based on the progress of usage of English and not only fixed to pupils, as well as on our teaching task. That means, everybody can learn from everybody, statement that should be shown to children in every school.

With all of this I have thought that applying my methodology involves the organization in four steps:

- Presenting a project based on kids interests, because it is the best way to create curiosity.
- Exploring the environment, due to the setting is going to be created specifically for children and they can explore it in freedom.

- Working by workshops (tasks), owing to they can choose the activity and level, hence the way for learning.
- Getting to the final goal, because it is necessary not to loose the unifying thread to hold students' motivation.

Finally, it is important to consider that, carrying out with this is impossible if teachers and schools do not want to get involved and do it. For that reason, I think that the first step to get to is that teachers should not be afraid of changes and be aware of our educational problems to try to solve them. This implies breaking with the methodologies they have already used and do not produce the results they were expected to. Implication, vocation and loving teaching are the main features to be a good teacher and succeeding in this amazing world.

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APPENDIX

1. Interviews

Interviews to teachers that use new methods.

Case 1: A woman teacher who is the tutor of the first grade of primary in a cooperative school called Mata de Jonc. Working by projects, tasks and environments (14/04/2015)

Q: “He vist que la vostra metodologia està basada en la feina per projectes, però com funcionen les classes exactament?”

A: “Se presenta els nins quin projecte volem fer i ells mateixos podran investigar i analitzar tot el que considerin sobre el tema. Nosaltres, els mestres els hem de guiar en la recerca i aprofitar aquesta situació i ambient per ensenyar els continguts marcats al currículum. Per tant, els nins adquireixen els continguts demanats, arribant als objectius demanats però d'una forma més dinàmica i atractiva per ells.

Per exemple, amb el meu grup aquest trimestre hem fet el projecte de les estrelles i l'univers. Ells mateixos han investigat i decidit què aprendre sobre tot aquest món. Nosaltres hem aprofitat cada ocasió educativa per incloure els nous continguts de les diferents àrees”.

Q: “Heu assistit a qualche curs de formació per dur a terme aquesta metodologia?”

A: “Sí, hem anat a Barcelona a l'escola Congrés Indians on fan feina completament per ambients i ens han mostrar com funciona i fins i tot hem pogut posar en pràctica la nostra experiència a les seves classes. Aquí a Mallorca vàrem participar en un petit seminari sobre la metodologia amb ambients, on podíem compartir les nostres experiències personals i comparar-les amb les d'altres professionals. Però en aquest cas no és un curs massa profitós, ja que no te mostren com se fa feina realment amb els ambients i, per tant, com aplicar aquestes estratègies a l'aula”.

Q: “Ha estat complicat implantar la feina per ambients? Com funciona?”

A: “Va ser una feina molt dura i complicada al principi, ja que requereix molta organització per part de tot el claustre. La concreció dels horaris entre mestres per poder fer els desdoblaments va

ser sens dubte el més complicat, perquè per poder fer la feina per ambients no pot estar tot el grup classe amb un mestre, ja que seria un autèntic caos. Per això, juntem els alumnes de primer i segon i feim tres grups de 10 – 12 nins màxim amb un mestre a cada petit grup. D'aquesta manera el professor responsable pot realitzar la seva feina de guia i observador d'oportunitats educatives amb més facilitat i eficàcia.

Una vegada, els alumnes estan col·locats a l'ambient pertinent, ells mateixos agafen el material que vulguin i investiguen sobre ell, reflexionen i finalment fan una representació (dibuix o escriuen) sobre aquell material, perquè serveix, que ha après sobre ell, etc.”

Q: “Perquè creus que funciona millor aquest sistema damunt d'altres en el desenvolupament dels infants?”

A: “El fet de fer tallers i ambients fa que els nins siguin més lliure a l'hora d'aprendre. Ells mateixos poden escollir què fer i amb què experimentar segons les seves necessitats i curiositats. D'aquesta manera, desenvolupen una gran capacitat creativa, imaginativa i d'investigació. A més sempre tenen molta motivació per aprendre coses noves, ja que se'ls està creant aquesta necessitat de saber, d'experimentar de treure conclusions amb materials propers a ells.

Jo crec que tenir els nins tancats a una aula asseguts cinc hores és totalment antinatural, de fet ni nosaltres mateixos ho podríem aguantar. Estar quiets, escoltant qualche cosa que mos diu una mestra que segurament no els interessa per res perquè segurament no és un contingut proper a ells”.

Q: “Com se duen a terme les classes d'anglès? Quina metodologia utilitzeu?”

A: “Durant les classes d'anglès no s'utilitza aquesta metodologia, tot i que la mestra vol formar – se i intentar canviar – la. Però de moment tenen un llibre de text, que no utilitzen massa, però en qualche ocasió sí i són classes més dedicades als jocs, cançons i conta – contes. Per tant, són bastant dinàmiques i no marquen un gran canvi amb el tractament de les altres assignatures”.

Q: “També he vist que teniu un auxiliar de conversa. Com funcionen aquestes classes? Donen bons resultats?”

A: “La nostra auxiliar de conversa no fa classe d'anglès, ja que, en primer lloc, no pot fer – ho, i a més el seu objectiu tampoc és aquest. La seva figura és present com aquella persona que només

xerra amb anglès i no hi ha més remei que comunicar – se amb ella en aquesta llengua.

Nosaltres la tenim durant les hores del treball per tallers i ella va observant als nins, s'apropa a ells i els hi dona feed – backs, petites explicacions o simplement xerren de qualque cosa que els hi a passat. D'aquesta manera els alumnes xerren de forma natural i confien més en la seva capacitat comunicativa en una llengua estrangera”.

Q: “Les famílies participen en l'actividad educativa? Han estat d'acord amb aquesta visió?”

A: “Les famílies han estat molt participatives i interessades per aquesta manera de fer feina. Els alumnes que tenim ara ja treballaven d'aquesta manera a Educació Infantil, per tant els familiars ja estaven abassats.

Malgrat això, a principi de curs varem fer un dia de jornada de portes obertes, on els pares varen venir a l'escola i varen poder experimentar i jugar amb tot el material que els seus fills utilitzen. D'aquesta manera varen poder observar la utilitat de la metodologia i del seguiment de les classes. A més varem insistir que seguim les directrius marcades pel currículum i que tots els materials estan homologats i preparats específicament per l'assoliments dels continguts marcats”.

Q: “Teniu alumnes amb deficiència visual o ceguera? En cas afirmatiu, aquests nins han tingut qualque problema d'adaptació quant a recursos o seguiment metodològic?”

A: “A la meva classe tenim un alumne, en Miquel Àngel, i no ha tingut cap tipus de problema ni d'adaptació social, ni curricular ni de recursos. Ell té la seva taula adaptada amb el faristol i si escrivim qualque cosa a la pissarra que no la veu be, s'apropa sense problemes. A més, aquesta manera de treballar fa que els seus possible problemes se redueixin a la metitat, ja que els nins tenen llibertat de moviment per la classe i no han d'estar allà asseguts mirant cap a la pissarra, sinó que ells mateixos van agafant materials i aprenent al seu ritme. De fet, ja has vist que practicament no tenim taules, ja que si necessitem reunir a tots els nins o fer qualque activitat a nivell grup – classe ho feim als bancs”.

Q: “El professorat, a nivell general, està format i motivat per seguir aquest tipus de metodologia?”

A: “En general a aquesta escola sí, de fet, si no fos així no seria possible dur a terme aquesta metodologia. Tots hem fet cursos de formació i sempre esteim estudiant, investigant i aprenent

cada dia de les pròpies experiències. Estic molt contenta en aquest sentit perquè fer feina dins un claustre on tothom està d'acord i a més fent un projecte educatiu tan innovador i on els nins poden gaudir, és un plaer”.

- Analysis conclusion of the usage of the method (own experience and real observation of children):

Children are sitting down in a circle in little benches. The teacher starts talking about the Easter holidays because children had written in their notebooks what they did during those two weeks.

Then the teacher said to them that it was time for the workshops and they joined with the second grade, meaning that, the workshops are carried out by the 1st cycle of primary.

Children are divide in three groups that belong to the three big knowledge areas: maths, logical games and language. Each workshop was in a specific classroom and children can move around them as they need and want, although there are orders stablished (the teacher says to each group where they have to start and they have to be in the same area at least 10 – 15 minutes).

In this enviornment, where I was include as another teacher else, I could observe the following features that can explain how the method works:

- Children are free to choose a task/game and they practise alone. The teacher has to observe, solve kids' doubts and be sure they are going in depth about the contents.
- Games and tasks are organized by levels, therefore, children can choose the best level for them to learn. The teacher has to observe if the child chooses correctly his level and if it is a challenge. *“Els nins saben què és un repte i que han d'escollir una activitat en la qual s'hagin d'esforçar, sinó els mestres l'animem a que agafi una tasca més adient”* (Carme Coreja).
- They usually work in pairs or alone, although they can talk with any classmate, because the space is free.
- There is an auxiliar for English conversation. She is form USA, therefore she only speaks English. She talks with all the children in little interventions and they

answer her in English, or they try it.

- When the tasks are finished, the groups come back to their classroom and they talk in big group about their own learning experiences

(T: *“Què ha passat avui, heu fet feina tranquils?”*)

S: *“No”*

T: *“Perquè pensau que ha passat això?”*

S: *“Per què hi havia molt de renou i no podia xerrar amb ella”.*

S: *“Siii, havíem de cridar!”*

T: *“Molt bé, i quina solució proposau?”*

S: *“Que estiguem tranquils i escollir bé amb qui fer feina”.*)

I think this is a good educational suggestion because students can learn whatever they want and b the way they need.

However, in this school only use this method during two days per week and in the core subjects (maths and languages). It can be interesting to try it with all the subjects, including English, and everyday.

Case 2: Headmaster of CEIP Puig de na Fàtima (Puigpunyent). They work with environment methodologies.

Q: *“He vist que la metodologia utilitzada a la vostra escola és per ambients? Perquè vareu decidir utilitzar aquesta nova visió educativa?”*

A: *“Hi va haver molts de factors, però els més destacables són las ganes i inquietut del claustre per canviar la metodologia, ja que ens vàrem adonar que fer las classes de manera tradicional no funcionava. De fet, la nostra escola a les proves per competències que se feien a 4t de primària va surtir que el rendiment era per davall de les possibilitats.*

Poc a poc, vàrem anar llevant els llibres de text, fent feina per projectes i per tallers, però no acabava de donar els resultats esperats, per això aquest curs vàrem decidir utilitzar els ambients a tota l'escola i observar com funcionava per anar canviant la nostra tasca segons les experiències i necessitats dels alumnes a cada moment.

D'aquesta manera aquest curs vàrem decidir canviar i apostar per una nova manera de fer feina. Ens vàrem formar, primer amb cursos impartits per part de la UIB i després fent visites tant a escoles de l'illa com de la Península”.

Q: “Ha estat complicat implantar la feina per ambients? Com funciona exactament?”

A: “Sí, va ser una feina complicada i dura, ja que és necessari coordinar-se i col·laborar amb tota la comunitat educativa, a més de preparar cada material i ambient d'acord amb els continguts donats al currículum de Primària.

També, com és el primer any que esteim aplicant aquesta metodologia, ens dedicam a l'observació i anàlisi del seu funcionament per anar aprenent i adaptant la nostra tasca a l'aprenentatge dels nins.

La implantació del treball per ambients ha estat generalitzada, és a dir, tota la escola fa feina d'aquesta manera i durant gran part del dia, tot i que les primeres hores del dia se fan feines més sistemàtiques amb el tutor referent del grup.

Aquestes feines sistemàtiques se fan per adquirir els continguts que amb els ambients són més difícils de donar o que no ens assegurem del tot que s'hagin adquirit, com pot esser per exemple, l'aprenentatge de les taules de multiplicar. És un contingut que s'ha d'aprendre i alomillor només amb el treball d'ambients no queden totalment clares.

Hi ha tres comunitats:

- Dels petits: Infantil amb els ambients: joc simbòlic, experimentació, mediateca, artístic, construccions
- Dels mitjans: 1r, 2n i 3r amb els ambients: misteri de les paraules, numeratics, món art, minichef i la vida
- Dels grans: 4t, 5è i 6è amb els ambients: explota, mçon fustart, comunicació, musicoteatre, món planetural i hort.

Durant els ambients, els nins es mesclen i formen grups de 10 – 12 per anar a l'ambient corresponent, on poden investigar i experimentar. El mestre té el paper de guia i observador de l'aprenentatge, és a dir, la seva figura no és d'imposició, sino d'ajudant i de resolució de dubtes”.

Q: “Perquè creus que funciona millor aquest sistema damunt d'altres en el desenvolupament dels

infants?”

A: “En primer lloc, perquè els alumnes són els protagonistes del seu propi aprenentatge i per tant aprenen el que realment volen, és a dir, se tenen en compte els seus interessos.

A més, com és un aprenentatge globalitzat i interdisciplinar cada nin pot anar al seu ritme, treballant de la mateixa manera els continguts marcats pel currículum. Per tant, l'avaluació serà individualitzada tenint en compte fins on arriba cada alumne.

També cal dir que els nins estan molt motivats i la seva actitud en venir a escola a canviant molt, així com la seva relació amb els mestres, ja que ja no el veuen com una persona que imposa i obliga a aprendre una sèrie de continguts que a ells no els interessa, sino que és un referent que els ajuda, els guia i acompanya en el seu procés d'aprenentatge.

Seguim la piràmide d'aprenentatges que diu que quan s'aprèn més és quan fas, manipules i experimentes amb allò que se vol adquirir i a més després s'ha d'explicar als companys, per tant, els nins fan seus els propis aprenentatges”.

Q: “Heu assistit a qualque curs de formació per dur a terme aquesta metodologia?”

A: “Sí, la UIB ens va donar les primera pautes i els ànims per aprendre més sobre aquestes metodologies novedoses i posteriorment, vàrem visitar diferents escoles dins de l'illa i de la resta de Espanya, com per exemple l'escola Martinet o Encants a Barcelona”.

Q: “El professorat, a nivell general, està format i motivat per seguir aquesta tipus de metodologia?”

A: “Evidentment, ja que sino seria impossible dur-lo a terme. Tots vàrem estar d'acord en implicar-nos plenament en aquesta feina, tot i que al principi alguns mestres tenien un poc de por per no haver utilitzat aquestes tècniques mai, però ara ja tot comença a funcionar i a tot el claustre cada vegada ens agrada més fer feina d'aquesta manera”.

Q: “A les classes d'anglès també utilitzau aquesta mateixa metodologia?”

A: “L'anglès el treballam als ambients de manera interdisciplinar, és a dir, en els moments d'expressió oral, lectures, etc, s'inclouen les tres llengües (la meitat del temps que s'ha de dedicar a l'anglès se fa d'aquesta manera).

Quant al treball sistemàtic, la mestra fa feina sense utilitzar llibre de text i per racons,

d'expressió oral, de “listening”, de lectura i d'escriptura. En principi va donar molta feina a la mestra, però després va funcionar molt bé i els nins estan encantats”.

Q: “Teniu alumnes amb deficiència visual o ceguera?”

A: “No”.

Q: “En cas afirmatiu, com responen aquests nins a la metodologia? En cas negatiu, creus que aquests nins tendrien qualque tipus de dificultat utilitzant aquest mètode?”

A: “No crec que tinguessin cap tipus de problema, ja que amb aquesta metodologia se fa feina de manera molt més inclusiva. Els nins van al seu ritme i aprenen a la seva manera, per tant no tendria cap impediment. Només seria necessari adaptar el material a les seves necessitats, fet que ja feim amb nins que tenim amb altres tipus de necessitats específiques”.

Q: “Las famílies participen en l'activitat educativa? Han estat d'acord amb aquesta visió?”

A: “Sí participen i molt. En general, han estat d'acord tot i que al principi va costar un poc convèncer-los sobre tot als pares dels més grans, ja que no entenien perquè fer-ho si ja canviaven d'escola l'any vinent. Però gràcies a les reunions i jornades de portes obertes varen quedar més tranquils i ara estan encantats, vénen i participen sempre que poden, formant així part de la comunitat educativa.

Sense la seva participació i involucració seria impossible dur a terme aquesta metodologia”.

Interviews to visually impaired children

Case 1: A ten year old child with a 70% of visual imparing (Audio record interview).

Q: “¿Te gusta ir al colegio?”

A: “Bueno, a veces. Hay horas que me aburro”.

Q: “¿A qué horas te aburres?”

A: “Pues de 9:00 a 10:00. De 10 a 10:30 me divierto y luego de 11:00 a 12:00 me vuelvo a aburrir y de 12 a 12:30 me divierto”.

Q: “Vamos, que solo te lo pasas bien en el recreo”.

A: “Sí, es que las clases son un rollo”.

Q: “¿Inglés cómo lo llevas? ¿Va bien? ¿Te gusta?”

A: “Bueno, creo que me va bien pero no me gusta”.

Q: “¿Por qué no? ¿Qué sucede en las clases?”

A: “Pues que la profesora me tiene manía”.

Q: “Bueno y a la hora de hacer exámenes o hacer actividades del libro las puedes hacer bien?”

A: “Bueno, más o menos porque el cuaderno este y el libro de actividades es un poco pequeño no puedo escribir bien”.

Q: “¿Y las imágenes cómo son?”

A: “¿Están un poco mal porque están en blanco y negro”

Q: “Y son grandes o son pequeñas?”

A: “Son pequeñas y me cuesta verlas a veces”.

Q: “¿Y entonces en los listening qué te pasa? Cuando ponen el CD y hablan tan rápido, ¿cómo haces para mirar las imágenes?”

A: “No se, a veces me lo invento”.

Q: “¿La profesora te adapta los exámenes? ¿Te hace las imágenes más grandes o algo?”

A: “No, no me ha hecho nada”.

Q: “¿La telelupa la tienes en el cole?”

A: “La telelupa no, una lupa más pequeña en mi mesa”.

Q: “¿También utilizas el ordenador, incluso para hacer exámenes?”

A: “Sí, sí, también”.

Q: “¿Por qué crees que te aburres tanto en inglés?”

A: “A parte de porque me grita cada dos por tres, no se explica muy bien la profe”.

Q: “Claro, lo ves un poco aburrido. No sabes muy bien por qué tienes que aprender eso, no?”

A: “Sí”.

Q: “¿Escribis mucho?”

A: “Hacemos más oral que otra cosa”.

Q: “¿Y el oral qué tal te va?”

A: “Bien, pero ahora hemos empezado con más escritura”.

Q: “Entiendo que las clases son más orales pero luego hacéis exámenes escritos, no?”

A: “Sí”.

Q: “Os deja hacer faltas de ortografía?”

A: “No, porque sino nos quita un punto”.

Q: “¿Utilizáis cada día el libro de texto?”

A: “Sí, el class book, el activity book y el cuaderno”.

Q: “¿Y a ti te gusta el libro?”

A: “No es que esté muy bien la verdad, porque no se entiende mucho lo que intenta explicar y la letra es un poco pequeña”.

Q: “Entonces a la hora de seguir la clase, ¿puedes seguir el libro y a la profesora bien?”

A: “A veces me cuesta porque algunas cosas no las consigo leer bien”.

Case 2: A 12 year old child who was born blind (Audio record interview)

Q: “¿Tu colegio es pequeño?”

A: “Sí, somos pocos compañeros, pero nos llevamos muy bien. Ahora que pasaré al instituto no podré estar con mis amigos y me da mucha pena”.

Q: “¿Y te gusta ir a la escuela?”

A: “Bueno, a veces. Me suelo aburrir y me da pereza, menos en el patio, Educación Física y en plástica”.

Q: “¿La asignatura de inglés cómo te va?”

A: “Se me da muy mal el inglés, solo se me da bien la pronunciación”.

Q: “¿Y qué nota has sacado este trimestre?”

A: “Un notable alto”.

Q: “¡Vaya! Si está muy bien, entonces no se te da mal ¿quizá es que la encuentras difícil?”

A: “Sí, puede ser. Eso de memorizar todo es un rollo”.

Q: ¿Qué te hacen memorizar una lista de vocabulario y estructuras del libro?”

A: “Sí, y claro me las aprendo, pero luego se me olvidan”.

Q: “¿Te adaptan los libros y todo el material?”

A: “Sí, tengo el libro de texto en braille y en el ordenador”.

Q: “Entonces, ¿realizas las clases de la misma manera que tus compañeros, no?”

A: “Sí, mismo vocabulario, exámenes y todo. ¡Ya me gustaría a mí que me quitasen cosas que estudiar!”

Q: “¿Y los exámenes como los haces?”

A: “En el ordenador con ayuda de la línea braille”.

Q: “¿Cómo te gustaría hacer las clases?”

A: “Pues no sé, con más cosas que pueda tocar, como hacíamos en la ONCE. Así me era más fácil aprender las palabras”.

Q: “¿Qué esperas del instituto?”

A: “Más de lo mismo. ¡Qué pereza!”

Interviews to ONCE's teachers.

Case 1: A woman who has been working for thirty years in ONCE and with a 75% of visual impairing.

Q: “¿Cuál es vuestro trabajo exactamente? ¿Cuál es vuestra tarea en la escuela?”

A: “Darle al alumno destrezas específicas para manejar las herramientas que necesite, por ejemplo la perkins o la telelupa. También asesoramos al maestro en las dificultades que tenga para poder atender al alumno con la dificultad, es decir, cómo debe actuar para que el alumno pueda acceder al curriculum.

Somos coordinadores de casos, es decir, determinamos necesidades que pueda tener el alumno y

que requieran que intervenga otro profesional del equipo específico. Si el alumno no se puede desenvolver por la escuela bien, venimos a la escuela y les ayudamos a moverse y desenvolverse por el edificio y en clase”.

Q: “¿Porqué decidiste dedicarte a esta especialidad?”

A: “Siempre tuve muy claro que me dedicaría a enseñar a niños ciegos, puesto que soy una afectada y puedo empatizar mucho con el alumnado”.

Q: “¿A cuántos alumnos atiendes ahora mismo? ¿Cuántos son ciegos totales?”

A: “ A 13 alumnos todos en escuelas de Palma, tanto privadas, concertadas como públicas.

Ciegos totales 2.

Q: “¿Cuántas horas semanales acudes a las escuelas para atender a tus alumnos? ¿Consideras que son suficientes?”

A: “Eso va según las necesidades de cada alumno. Los ciegos totales obviamente lleva mucho más tiempo en las que se dan 5 horas semanales. Los deficientes visuales más pequeños normalmente una hora o dos a la semana.

Finalmente, tenemos alumnos de seguimiento, es decir, acudir a las escuelas para comprobar que todo funcione y no tengan ningún problema. Además de prevenir necesidades como uso de ordenadores, antes deberían aprender mecanografía. Por tanto, es un trabajo de supervisión y seguimiento”.

“Las horas son suficientes si se trabaja adecuadamente, ya que no es necesario tener muchas horas porque nuestro objetivo es ir poco tiempo y que el alumno pueda desenvolverse como los demás en el aula sin la necesidad de tener a ningún profesional que le atienda todo el tiempo”.

Q: “En tu opinión, ¿cómo es la actitud docente de los maestros ante este alumnado? ¿Es cómodo trabajar con ellos?”

A: “Los maestros en general son bastante receptivos, aunque en ocasiones lo ven una tarea difícil considerando incluso que vayan a un colegio específico.

La mayoría tienen el problema de atender a todas las necesidades que pueden aparecer en el aula, por tanto no pueden atender como se debería. Por tanto, te encuentras con algunos que sí tienen

en cuenta esta discapacidad pero otros se ven desbordados y no le atienden como debería dejándonos a nosotros el trabajo. Sin embargo estos últimos son los menos, en general están muy involucrados.

También trabajamos mucho con los PT”.

Q: “¿Hay falta de información y formación del profesorado?”

A: “Sí”

Q: “¿Podría la ONCE ayudar a cubrir esta falta de formación a los maestros? ¿Cómo?”

A: “Sí podría, pero falta interés por el profesorado de las escuelas, ya que por muchos cursos que hagamos si no se les dan créditos o es fuera de su horario laboral, no vienen ni se interesan. Por tanto no hay formación pero tampoco interés”.

Q: “¿Alguna vez has ayudado a tu alumno en clase de inglés?”

A: “Sí. Mi función era hacer la descripción en la lengua materna de las imágenes que el profesor muestra al resto de los alumnos o que vienen en el libro para hacer las actividades”.

Q: “¿Cómo crees que se sienten los alumnos ciegos en las clases de inglés?”

A: “Muchas veces no se enteran de nada. Se distraen mucho y les cuesta enterarse”.

Q: “¿Cuál podría ser una solución?”

A: “Cambiar la metodología para que no sea tan visual, es decir, que entren en juego el resto de los sentidos. Por ejemplo al tener más desarrollado el oído tienen muy buena pronunciación”.

Case 2: An ONCE's teacher who is a man with visually impaired.

Q: “¿Cuál es vuestro trabajo exactamente? ¿Cuál es vuestra tarea en la escuela?”

A: “Asesorar y orientar al equipo docente y a los profesionales que intervienen con el alumno. Atender las necesidades del alumno derivadas de su discapacidad visual siguiendo las directrices del centro según lo que marca el curriculum”.

Q: “¿Porqué decidiste dedicarte a esta especialidad?”

A: “Dentro de la rama de la educación especial es un déficit del que yo personalmente también sufro por lo que puedo conseguir empatía con el alumnado”.

Q: “¿A cuántos alumnos atiendes ahora mismo? ¿Cuántos son ciegos totales?”

A: “28, de los cuales intervengo a unos 15. El resto son de seguimiento.

De los que intervengo 10 son ciegos totales”.

Q: “¿Cuántas horas semanales acudes a las escuelas para atender a tus alumnos? ¿Consideras que son suficientes?”

A: “Hora y media semanal por alumno de media. Muchas veces depende del alumno. Con muchos alumnos considero que se necesitaría más horas. Aunque se necesitaría otra organización específica. La ONCE tiene un currículum específico que no es evaluable ahora mismo, por lo que considero que estos aprendizajes se deberían llevar a cabo como unas asignaturas de más y evaluables y para ello los alumnos deberían salir de los centros venir a la ONCE y ser educados en este sentido como se debe, puesto que hay áreas y aprendizajes específicos que no podran adquirir por sí solos en la escuela”.

Q: “En tu opinión, ¿cómo es la actitud docente de los maestros ante este alumnado? ¿Es cómodo trabajar con ellos?”

A: “Por lo general es de bastante desconocimiento y ante eso algunos lo que buscan es hacerlo igual que con el resto de alumnos, con lo cual no funciona. En cambio otros ante eso buscan recursos y ayudas para adaptar su tarea docente”.

Q: “¿Hay falta de información y formación del profesorado?”

A: “Formación e información hay, pero luego depende del interés de cada uno y de su forma de afrontar las necesidades de ese alumno”.

Q: “¿Podría la ONCE ayudar a cubrir esta falta de formación a los maestros? ¿Cómo?”

A: “Sí podría, pero dentro de un sistema de formación reglado, como podría ser una universidad”.

Q: “¿Alguna vez has ayudado a tu alumno en clase de inglés?”

A: “No, porque cuando buscamos huecos para intervenir es en las asignaturas troncales.

Las pocas veces que he podido estar en una clase de inglés me he topado con los mismos problemas que en otras asignaturas, es decir, adaptación de material”.

Case 3: A teacher from ONCE who is a woman with no visually impaired.

Q: “¿Cuál es vuestro trabajo exactamente? ¿Cuál es vuestra tarea en la escuela?”

A: “Depende de las necesidades que tenga el alumno con deficiencia visual grave y de la edad. Primero intentamos que entiendan que hay que hacer ciertas adaptaciones del curriculum para que puedan acceder a cualquier tipo de información. Si es necesario le enseñamos el método de lecto escritura en braille. Intervenimos en todas las áreas de desarrollo y trabajamos mucho con los PT y el tutor de aula puesto que es el que se ocupará de la integración del alumno en el aula. El objetivo es que sea autónomo, se integre y se sienta seguro en el ambiente escolar”.

Q: “¿Porqué decidiste dedicarte a esta especialidad?”

A: “Porque me llamaron para atención temprana como substituta y me gustó me pareció un trabajo interesante y creativo”.

Q: “¿A cuántos alumnos atiendes ahora mismo? ¿Cuántos son ciegos totales?”

A: “ A 25, de los cuales 16 intervengo, en cambio el resto son de seguimiento. Ciegos totales hay 1”.

Q: “¿Cuántas horas semanales acudes a las escuelas para atender a tus alumnos? ¿Consideras que son suficientes?”

A: “ Hora o hora y media semanales con cada uno, con la excepción de un alumno de 5 horas de seguimiento por necesidades más específicas”.

“Sí”.

Q: “En tu opinión, ¿cómo es la actitud docente de los maestros ante este alumnado? ¿Es cómodo trabajar con ellos?”

A: “Al principio tienen miedo de no saber cómo actuar. Después algunos consideran que es un trabajo que les supera y por tanto los niños no se integran nunca, y otros se interesan y lo consiguen integrar. Todos se quejan que no tienen recursos, pero todos ellos agradecen nuestra intervención”.

Q: “¿Hay falta de información y formación del profesorado?”

A: “No falta formación del profesorado, los problemas se la encuentran los nuevos maestros porque no tienen experiencia. Deben considerar la autoformación”.

Q: “¿Podría la ONCE ayudar a cubrir esta falta de formación a los maestros? ¿Cómo?”

A: “No sé si sabría o no”.

Q: “¿Alguna vez has ayudado a tu alumno en clase de inglés?”

A: “Sí. Fue una experiencia absurda para mí y de desinterés por parte del alumno”.

Q: “¿Cómo crees que se sienten los alumnos ciegos en las clases de inglés?”

A: “No se enteraban de lo que se estaba hablando. Las clases de inglés a día de hoy son de carácter exclusivamente visual sin si quiera considerar la necesidad del deletreo. No comprendo cómo una lengua ha de apoyarse tanto en la visión, cuando un lenguaje es escuchar y comunicación”.

Q: “¿Cuál podría ser una solución?”

A: “Buscar otra metodología apoyada más en la oralidad y no tanto en la visual”.

2. Teaching units

- **1st cycle project: We cook!**

Justification

This project about food will be done to use the foreign language by a natural way in a real context, where children will feel comfortable and free to speak and express themselves in English.

The topic was chosen by kids, due to, they have to feel the curiosity to learn about it using the language, because they will need it. Therefore, teacher's task has to be adapted to their motivations and interests for creating an environment full of curiosity and natural language development, where kids will find the sense of using English.

For that reason, the final goal will be related to the nearest reality of child, that is, using the TV programme MasterChef Junior as the unifying thread of the project.

Objectives

- To express themselves in English.
- To be aware about the usage of the foreign language.
- To become expert cooks.
- To use the vocabulary and basic structures in a natural way and real context.
- To keep the motivation and curiosity about the issue.

Contents

There aren't specific contents, owing to, kids are going to learn vocabulary and the grammar structures that they need to carry out the project.

Therefore, there will be food and basic cooking utensils vocabulary, but there aren't specific words to be used, that is, children will be free to learn everything they want about the main topic.

Methodology

Children in an specific environment, in a kitchen in this case, will be able to investigate and explore everything, that is, find the answers to their curiosity about the topic, besides they will choose the activity to do in freedom and suitable to their learning way.

For that reason, the methodology used is based on four big steps:

- Present the project

It is necessary to create a big project as an unifying threat based on kids interesting. A brainstorm will be done about possible topics of the project and finally it will be chosen the most motivational for them.

Later, the teacher has to explain the final goal, that is, they are becoming expert cooks to win the prize of MasterChef Junior and the environment will be created as realistic as it is possible.

That is the moment to introduce the curiosity and keep it to create the necessity to answer the questions about the main issue.

- Environment and materials exploring

The classroom will be a big kitchen where there will be many different materials about food, cooking utensils and recipes. They can explore and investigate them alone or in little groups, trying to find the names in English or matching some actions with cooking utensils.

Then, in big group children can explain all their sensations and learnings in the new environment.

- Carrying out the project working by tasks

Children will have different kind of activities, some of them about researching and investigation, and others to work with all their senses and with a variety of levels, that is, they can choose the activities that are challenges for them.

They will work alone or in pairs with the classmate that they think it is comfortable for working, who can not be the best friend.

Finally, at the end of the lesson, children can express their sensations and learnings to all the classmates. By this way they will be able to analyze their own progress about the topic.

- Get the final goal

That is, working in little groups, pupils will compete for the final prize of MasterChef where they will do a recipe while they explain the ingredients, steps and cooking utensils used.

Workshops organization

The tasks will be organized by levels and adapted to the group of children's needs. They will find them always at the same place with the pertinent instructions and ordered by the same way.

The activities will be related with researching, real experimentation with food and everything children need to get the final goal. For example, we can search videos and recipes in Internet or new cooking techniques and utensils, and even we can cook in class to practice for the final competition. Besides, we can't forget the sense development that should be included in the tasks. Some examples to develop different senses than the sight can be the followed:

Olfactory sensitivity

1. Students have got different kind of smells and everybody with eyes closed has to guess the smell. Who smells has to describe what he is feeling and the other has to guess from the descriptions. They can express themselves by questions and answers between them or by explanations and listening.

Teachers will give them some vocabulary guides such as: sweet, sour, strong smell, vinegar, chocolate, strawberry, vanilla, fried, coffee, etc. These words and guides will change depending of level. Therefore, kids have to choose the most suitable for their learning process.

2. It smells well? Children can create recipes using the smell to choose the ingredients. When they will have all the food to be used, they can think how to cook and which cooking utensils they need.

Finally, they can write the recipe or tell their classmates, depending of levels.

3. I like it/I don't like it. Kids have to smell and choose which ingredients they like and which not. Then, they can make a list about food they need for the recipe depending of the smells instead of the tastes or appearances.

To develop tactile sense:

1. Some food material made with eva foam will be given to kids for identifying only by touching. Then they can tell or write, depending of the level, the names in English and classify them as they like or they don't like for their recipe.
2. Read the recipe and choose which ingredients you need. One of the pair has to read and the other one has to match the ingredients made with eva foam. Then they can change ingredients of the recipe.
3. Guess the cooking utensil. One of the pair has to touch one of the tools and try to describe it to his partner for him guessing. Then they can classify them with the name in English or the action you can do with it, depending of the level.

Hearing sensitivity

1. Listen and remember. Children can watch some videos of Masterchef Junior and they can make a list, orally or written, of ingredients and actions.
For higher levels, they can ask between them some guide questions such as: *“Do you remember which ingredient...?”*, *“Do you like....?”*, *“Do you need apples in the recipe?”*
2. Listen and guess the utensil. Only with sounds, kids have to guess the utensil it is used. The partner has to make the sound; even he can make some mimics if they think that the word is difficult to guess.
For higher levels it can be included the action is doing it with the tool.
3. Listen and find the recipe. Children will listen to the list of ingredients of a real meal and they have to choose the most suitable recipe for those ingredients.
To increase the level, it can be included specific steps of the recipe, which implies more concentration and memory.

Learning by tasting

1. Taste and explain. Some different tastes will be given to children and they have to explain how this taste is using a vocabulary guide with words such as: sweet, sour, awful, delicious, similar to... (Chocolate, coffee, lemon), acid, etc.
Finally, they can find out the food and learn the name in English.
2. Taste and classify. Children eat some ingredients and they can classify them as I like or I

don't like the flavor for their recipe.

3. Taste and guess which cooking utensil it has been used. Some ingredients will be manipulated by many ways, and children have to taste for guessing the food and the utensil used to create that texture (for example an apple cut, they should say "*It is an apple. Knife*").

For higher levels, they can say the action done on the food too.

By this way, pupils have got three ingredients' classification, depending of the smell, taste or appearance to choose them for the best recipe they have ever done. Moreover, they will know all about the cooking utensils, how they sound, how are they like and when they need them.

That is, pupils will become more sensitive and they will be able to identify carefully all the food smells, tastes and textures, besides they will be more confident to choose the ingredients and cooking utensils.

If we join all the information searched, the videos watched and the free exploration and investigation experiences, we will create deep learnings and significative for children, that means, kids will be able to explain and understand all the steps of any recipe in English. Therefore, they are going to be prepared for being expert cooks, using the foreign language in a natural way, because they will need it during the whole project.

Materials

- To create materials
 - Eva foam.
 - Clothes.
 - Different kind of papers.
 - Perkins (writing in braille).
 - Cardboard.
 - Tempera and plastiline.
- To create environment
 - Wrapping paper.
 - Cardboard.
 - Tempera.

- Blue – tack.
- Variety of paper.
- To develop the project
 - Tupperware and tins.
 - Computer with headphones.
 - Oven.
 - Fridge.
- Space organization
 - Avoid the obstacles. It is important to provide kids a comfortable place to do the activities, and not to disturb the others.

Timing

There aren't specific hours to do the project, due to, it depends of the group of children and their needs and motivation. That is, kids decide when the project is finished, because they will be able to know if they have learnt enough about the topic or not.

However, two projects every trimester should be ideal to dig deeply the topic and keep the motivation and curiosity.

Evaluation

The assessment will be done by two ways:

- Teacher's observation: The teacher must observe the child attitude individually, that means to heed the real needs, the own progress and the effort made by the kid. Therefore, the contents considered to each child will change depending of the individual features.

However, there are some points that are necessary to be acquired:

- Speaking and using English as a communicative tool.
 - Knowing all the ingredients and tools used in the recipe.
 - Investigating and exploring in freedom, but do not disturb the classmates.
- Children's evaluation: Kids will be aware about their own learning and they can be critical with themselves.

Moreover, they can help teachers to improve their task, owing to, they are going to

express their feelings about the project and the activities developed.

2nd cycle project: Wildlife!

Justification

This project about the wildlife (animals and habitats) will be done to use the foreign language by a natural way in a real context, where children will feel comfortable and free to speak and express themselves in English.

The topic was chosen by kids, due to they will feel the curiosity to learn about it using the language, because they need it. Therefore, teacher's task has to be adapted to their motivations and interests for creating an environment full of curiosity and natural language development, where kids will find the sense of using English.

For that reason, the final goal will be related to the nearest reality of child, that is, being wildlife's explorers.

Objectives

- To express themselves in English.
- To be aware about the usage of the foreign language.
- To become animals and habitats explorers.
- To use the vocabulary and basic structures in a natural way and real context.
- To keep the motivation and curiosity about the issue.

Contents

There aren't specific contents, owing to, kids are going to learn vocabulary and the grammar structures that they need to carry out the project.

Therefore, there will be animals and vocabulary about nature, but there aren't specific words to be acquired, that is, children will be free to learn everything they want about the main topic.

Methodology

Children will be able to investigate and explore three different environments: the jungle, the ocean and the forest, where they will become experts of one habitat, and finally all the groups will explain to the others the learnings about the issue. Hence, they are going to find the answers to their curiosity about the topic, besides they will choose the activity to do in freedom and suitable to their learning way.

Kids will chose the habitat to be explorers, that is, teachers should change them if it is necessary, due to, maybe they only want to explore the ocean, or the jungle and the forest.

For that reason, the methodology used is based on four big steps:

- Present the project

It is necessary to create a big project as an unifying threat based on kids interesting. A brainstorm will be done about possible topics of the project and finally it will be chosen the most motivational for them.

Later, the teacher has to explain the final goal, that is, they are becoming wildlife's explorers to be experts about the animals and nature features of the ocean, jungle and forest. The environment will be created as realistic as it is possible.

That is the moment to introduce the curiosity and keep it to create the necessity to answer the questions about the main topic.

- Environment and materials exploring

The classroom will be divided in three big areas: one for the jungle, other for the ocean and finally one for the forest. In each one, there will be many different materials about the animals living there and their habitat. They can explore and investigate them alone or in little groups, trying to find the names in English or recognizing the weather in each environment.

Then, in big group children can explain all their sensations and learnings in the three habitats.

- Carrying out the project working by workshops (tasks)

Children, in the habitat chosen by them, will have different kind of activities, some of them about researching and investigation, and others to work with all their senses and with a variety of levels, that is, they can choose the activities that are challenges for them.

They will work alone or in pairs with the classmate that they think it is comfortable for

working, who can not be the best friend.

Finally, at the end of the lesson, children can express their sensations and learnings to all the classmates about their environment. By this way they will be able to analyze their own progress about the topic.

- Get the final goal

That is, working in little groups, pupils will record a video explaining everything they know about their habitat as explorers and experts do. And at the end, all the class will watch the videos and talk about them and the learnings they have already acquired.

Workshops organization

The tasks will be organized by levels and adapted to the group of children's needs. They will find them always at the same place with the pertinent instructions and ordered by the same way.

The activities will be related with researching, real experimentation with animals and everything children need to get the final goal. For example, we can search information and watch some videos in Internet and even we can watch films about animals or visit zoos or aquariums.

Moreover, we can't forget the sense development that should be included in the tasks. Some examples to develop different senses than the sight can be the followed:

Hearing sensitivity

1. Listen and identify the animal. Children with eyes closed, can hear the sounds of different animals and try to guess which animal is it.

In each environment there will be animals living there, but it can be included some that do not live there and ask them: *“What do you think about this animals?”*

For higher levels, sounds of the habitat can be useful too.

2. Listen and match. Listen to your partner descriptions and choose the animals according to that description. It can be included actions that animals can do in that environment. Depending of level, they can match the names or toys, or write the name in English.
3. Imagine and hear. Kids have to imagine they are an animal of their environment, and they have to listen to some habitat sounds and explain how are they feeling in those living

conditions and if they can live there or not.

The teacher will give them some vocabulary guides, such as: comfortable, nice, strange, uncomfortable, can/can't eat..., cold, hot, snowing, rainy, sunny, etc. This list of words and structures can change depending of levels.

Tactile activities

- Touch and identify. Some toys and fluffy animals will be given to children and they have to identify them by touch (eyes are closed) and tell the names or even write them, depending of the level.

They also can ask to their partner with the structure: *“Is it...?”* and the classmate answers *“Yes it is”* or *“No it isn't”*.

- Identify the habitat and choose the animals that live in there. Pupils touching the environments have to identify them and decide which animals live there and place them accordingly.

Then, they can do it backwards, that is touching the animals and say which environment it is.

- Touch the textures. We can use different clothes and materials to simulate the textures appeared in the nature or in the animals. Pupils can touch them and try to match with an habitat or animal. For example: soft clothes for hair texture, leather clothes for scales or leaves for the trees.

They can make questions among them such as, *“which animals have got hair?”*

By this way, pupils can identify and know everything about the animals and habitats: the sounds, the smells and the textures living there, in conclusion they will be immersed in the environment, even feeling the same sensations as the animal feels.

For that reason, pupils will become more sensitive and they will be able to identify carefully all the features of the ocean, jungle and forest habitats, besides all the animals that live or should live in each environment.

If we join all the information searched, the videos watched and the free exploration and investigation experiences, we will create deep and significative learning for children, that means, kids will be able to explain everything about the wildlife in English. Therefore, they are going to

be prepared for being the best animal's explorers, using the foreign language in a natural way, because they will need it during the whole project.

Materials

- To create materials
 - Toys and fluffy toys.
 - Clothes (different textures).
 - Different kind of papers.
 - Perkins (writing in braille).
 - Cardboard.
 - Eva foam.
 - Tempera and plastiline.
- To create environment
 - Wrapping paper.
 - Cardboard.
 - Tempera.
 - Blue – tack.
 - Variety of paper.
- To develop the project
 - Computers with headphones and Internet
 - Video camera.
 - Pencil and rubber.
 - Paper.
- Space organization
 - Avoid the obstacles. It is important to provide kids a comfortable place to do the activities, and not to disturb the others.
 - Distinguished areas for each environment. Do not mix them and they should be clearly separated.

Timing

There aren't specific hours to do the project, due to it depends of the group of children

and their needs and motivation. That is, kids decide when the project is finished, because they will be able to know if they have learnt enough about the topic or not.

However, two projects every trimester should be ideal to dig deeply the topic and keep the motivation and curiosity.

Evaluation

The assessment will be done by two ways:

- Teacher's observation: The teacher must observe the child attitude individually, that means to heed the real needs, the own progress and the effort made by the kid. Therefore, the contents considered to each child will change depending of the individual features.

However, there are some points that are necessary to be acquired:

- Speaking and using English as a communicative tool.
 - Knowing the animals that live in the environment they are explorers, and the basic features of it.
 - Investigating and exploring in freedom, but do not disturb the classmates.
- Children's evaluation: Kids will be aware about their own learning and they can be critical with themselves.

Moreover, they can help teachers to improve their task, owing to, they are going to express their feelings about the project and the activities developed.

3rd cycle project: The universe!

Justification

This project about the universe will be done to use the foreign language by a natural way in a real context, where children will feel comfortable and free to speak and express themselves in English.

The topic was chosen by kids, due to they will feel the curiosity to learn about it using the language, because they need it. Therefore, teacher's task has to be adapted to their motivations and interests for creating an environment full of curiosity and natural language development, where kids will find the sense of using English.

For that reason, the final goal will be related to the nearest reality of child, which is creating a galaxy in little groups.

Objectives

- To express themselves in English.
- To be aware about the usage of the foreign language.
- To become astronauts and explore the universe.
- To know everything about galaxies.
- To use the vocabulary and basic structures in a natural way and real context.
- To keep the motivation and curiosity about the topic.

Contents

There aren't specific contents, owing to, kids are going to learn vocabulary and the grammar structures that they need to carry out the project.

Therefore, there will be animals and vocabulary about nature, but there aren't specific words to be acquired, that is, children will be free to learn everything they want about the main topic.

Methodology

Children will be able to investigate and explore the environment, a huge rocket, where they will become astronauts and they will know everything about the universe and galaxies. Finally all the groups will explain to the school the learnings about the issue.

Hence, they are going to find the answers to their curiosity about the topic, besides they will choose the activity to do in freedom and suitable to their learning way.

For that reason, the methodology used is based on four big steps:

- Present the project

It is necessary to create a big project as an unifying threat based on kids interesting. A brainstorm will be done about possible topics of the project and finally it will be chosen the most motivational for them.

Later, the teacher has to explain the final goal, that is, they are becoming astronauts to

create their own galaxy. The environment will be created as realistic as it is possible.

That is the moment to introduce the curiosity and keep it to create the necessity to answer the questions about the main topic.

- Environment and materials exploring

The classroom will be a huge rocket full of space elements such as, stars, planets and satellites. That is, kids will find many different materials about the Milky Way (Solar System galaxy) and other neighbor galaxies. They can explore and investigate them alone or in little groups, trying to find the names in English or distinguishing the main features of planets and galaxies.

Then, in big group children can explain all their sensations and learnings in this new environment.

- Carrying out the project working by workshops (tasks)

Children will have different kind of activities, some of them about researching and investigation and others to work with all their senses and with a variety of levels, that is, they can choose the activities that are challenges for them.

They will work alone or in pairs with the classmate that they think it is comfortable for working, who can not be the best friend.

Finally, at the end of the lesson, children can express their sensations and learnings to all the classmates. By this way they will be able to analyze their own progress about the topic.

- Get the final goal

That is, working in little groups, pupils will create their own galaxy with different materials and finally they have to show it and explain the parts and basic features to all the students of school. They can do it with a power point presentation, a mural or a video.

Workshops organization

The tasks will be organized by levels and adapted to the group of children's needs. They will find them always at the same place with the pertinent instructions and ordered by the same way.

The activities will be related with researching, real experimentation with the universe (looking through the telescope) and everything children need to get the final goal. For example, we can search information and watch some videos in Internet and even we can watch films about the universe, such as Star Wars.

Moreover, we can't forget the sense development that should be included in the tasks. Some examples to develop different senses than the sight can be the followed:

Hearing sensitivity

1. Hear to some words. Students will listen to some songs (videos from Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHAqT4hXnMw>) and they have to try to identify the most words possible. Some of them are: The Earth, sun, stars, Solar System, Milky Way or galaxy).

Then, they can talk about the vocabulary with questions and answers like these: *“I listen galaxy, do you know what is it?”*

2. Listen to some sounds and identify or explain what is happening. Kids have to listen to some noises, such as, explosions, rockets or crashes and they have to explain what are they listening to, or even say which the event is if they know it.

Tactile activities

1. Touch and identify the planets. With the eyes closed, students have to touch different planets of Solar System and try to identify them for the size.

Then, they can place them in the correct order regarding the Sun. They will have a Solar System print with relief to help them.

2. Match the textures with the planets' features. To know the basic features of a planet we can use some textures, such as, leather for Neptune because it is the coldest planet, or wool for Mercury, due to, is the hottest. Children can match the texture with a planet for a better understanding of it.
3. Touch the stars placing and say which constellation is it. We will give them some constellations made with eva foam and children will identify them by touching. We can give them a print with relief with the names of the most important constellations.

By this way, pupils can identify and know everything about the planets and galaxies: the sizes, shapes and even some universe real sounds. In conclusion they will be immersed in the environment, even feeling they are travelling by a rocket and walking on planets and moons.

For that reason, pupils will become more sensitive and they will be able to identify carefully the sizes of the different planets of Solar System, stars placing in the most important constellations and the basic features of a galaxy.

If we join all the information searched, the videos watched and the free exploration and investigation experiences, we will create deep and significative learning for children, that means kids will be able to explain everything about the universe in English. Therefore, they are going to be prepared for creating their own galaxy, using the foreign language in a natural way, because they will need it during the whole project.

Materials

- To create materials
 - Porexpan (Spheres with different sizes).
 - Clothes (different textures).
 - Different kind of papers.
 - Perkins (writing in braille).
 - Cardboard.
 - Eva foam.
 - Tempera and plastiline.
- To create environment
 - Wrapping paper.
 - Cardboard.
 - Tempera.
 - Blue – tack.
 - Variety of paper.
- To develop the project
 - Computers with headphones and Internet
 - Video camera.

- Power point presentations.
- Paper, pencil, rubber and colors.
- Space organization
 - Avoid the obstacles. It is important to provide kids a comfortable place to do the activities, and not to disturb the others.

Timing

There aren't specific hours to do the project, due to it depends of the group of children and their needs and motivation. That is, kids decide when the project is finished, because they will be able to know if they have learnt enough about the topic or not.

However, two projects every trimester should be ideal to dig deeply the topic and keep the motivation and curiosity.

Evaluation

The assessment will be done by two ways:

- Teacher's observation: The teacher must observe the child attitude individually, that means to heed the real needs, the own progress and the effort made by the kid. Therefore, the contents considered to each child will change depending of the individual features.

However, there are some points that are necessary to be acquired:

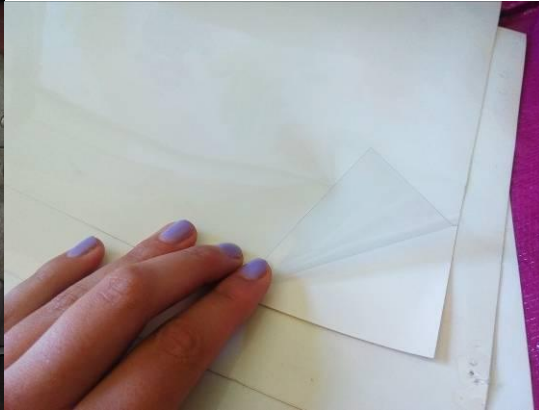
- Speaking and using English as a communicative tool.
 - Knowing the planets of Solar System and the basic constellations.
 - Investigating and exploring in freedom, but do not disturb the classmates.
- Children's evaluation: Kids will be aware about their own learning and they can be critical with themselves.

Moreover, they can help teachers to improve their task, owing to, they are going to express their feelings about the project and the activities developed.

3. Materials' examples



Picture 1: Perkins (braille typewriter)



Picture 2: Stick paper for Perkins



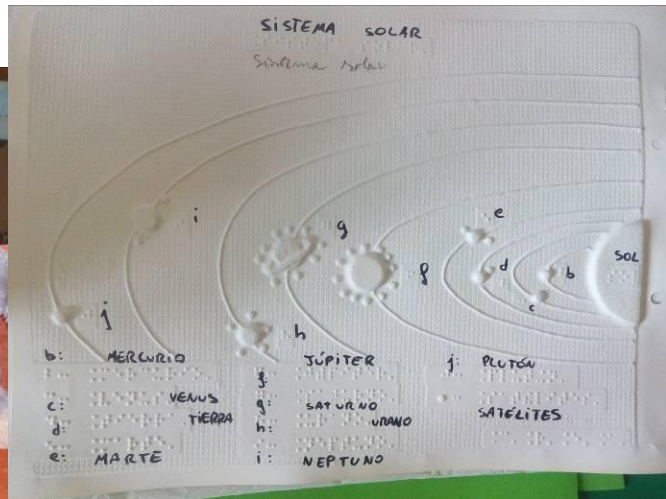
Picture 3: Wikki stix.



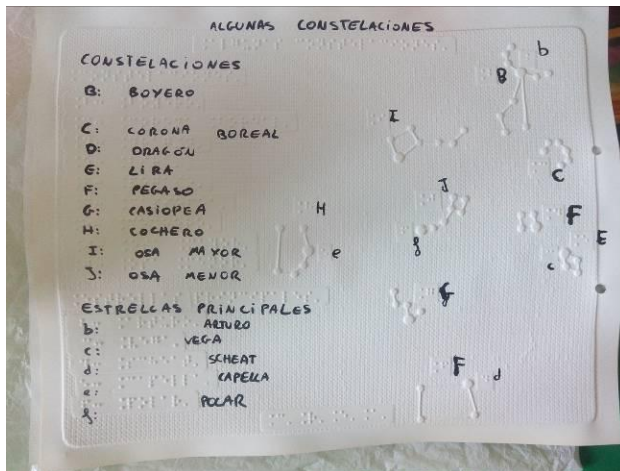
Picture 4: Food made with eva foam.



Picture 5: Some animal fluffy toys



Picture 6: Print with relief



Picture 7: Print with relief (2)



Picture 8: Print with relief (3)