

## **CASE STUDY**

**Your Reader Centre Plan is working this year through children's books in order to have a final project about the books read during the school year. How would you contribute to the Reader Centre Plan in the FL classroom? You are in the third level of Primary Education.**

The present practical case aims to talk how to contribute to the Reader Centre Plan from the FL classroom. In order to structure the essay correctly, I will first give a theoretical background about the use of children's books in the FL classroom and fostering reading in Primary education. Then, I will give some practical examples of activities that we can carry out in our class. Finally, I will end up with my personal opinion as a conclusion.

### **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

First of all, I considered essential to have a look at the legal framework in order to contextualise and justify the importance of reading in our English class:

The LOMCE establishes in its 11<sup>th</sup> article the importance of mastering a foreign language as a priority in the education like consequence of the process of globalization in which we live, simultaneously it appears as one of the principal lacks of our educational system. The European Union fixes the promotion of the multilingüism as an unrenounceable objective for the construction of an European project. The Law supports firmly the multilingüism, redoubling the efforts to achieve that the students are unrolled fluently at least in the first foreign language, which level of oral and reading comprehension and oral and written expression turns out to be decisive to favor the professional ambitions.

Moreover, our RD 126/2014 justifies reading skills in its 6<sup>th</sup> article as one of the main purposes of the Primary Education.

Finally our D 82/2014 establishes the consecution of contents in all the levels of primary education, and highlights the importance of working not only English as a language, but also as a compound of cultural traditions and values.

In addition the Common European Framework of Reference for languages 2001 establishes the main aim of the English Language Teaching as the acquisition of the communicative competence in a language (EFL) through the skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing.

Arguments for the use of young children's books in language teaching and learning are numerous (Power-Miller and Hubbard 1991; Butler and Trubill 1987; Harwayne 1992) Children's literature makes use of natural language in familiar contexts. The familiar contexts of the stories allow the readers to make connections between the new information that the text provides and their own background knowledge. The information in the text includes more than just vocabulary, it involves syntax, flow of language, intonation, pronunciation and genre. A children's story is typically short and can be read in one sitting. The affective domain is involved in the reading of a story, in that the student associates the reading of a story with recollections of the past. The experience of being read to as a child and the memory of stories told by family and friends set the stage for the positive involvement of the reader. These memories lower the affective filter as described by Krashen (1982) and allow for meaningful learning to occur. When anxiety is lowered, a sense of community can be established through the shared experience of reading and listening that optimizes the climate for learning.

The illustrations that are an integral part of children's books help the reader comprehend meaning without requiring skills in reading the language. The illustrations exist in a relationship with the text and support its meaning. Culturally authentic illustrations reveal the target culture without resorting to written description. Culture is thus experienced visually and further supported through the text. This mutually complementary process allows culture to be learned intuitively, much like oral language is learned in L.

### **PRACTICAL EXAMPLES**

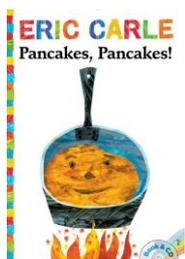
Once having exposed a brief theoretical background, I am going to explain some activities that can be carried out in the English class to contribute to the Reader Centre Plan.

Before planning the activities it is important to have into account our students' level to choose appropriate materials and design suitable activities. Our students are in the third

level of primary education. They have studied English in the previous years. They are familiarised with the contents related to this area. Therefore our group shows an acceptable proficiency regarding to the contents and skills related to our subject

The books that I have chosen are written by Eric Carle. Eric Carle' books integrate the English Language, with the Science contents and at the same time they work on values. Looking at the interdisciplinary character of the Education I find these books suitable for the integration of different disciplines.

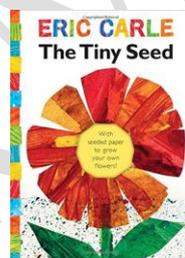
Taking into account the Reader Centre Plan and looking at the final project, I have decided my pupils work on a book each term. I have planned four lessons for each book. The books chosen connect with their English level of comprehension and production and with the study of other subjects, in this case, I have taken the science syllabus to connect books and contents. We will do an art project too as final activity. The books chosen are:



1<sup>st</sup> TERM: Pancakes, pancakes!



2<sup>nd</sup> TERM. The very lonely firefly



3<sup>rd</sup> TERM: The tiny seed.

What I am going to develop in this case are activities to work on "The very lonely firefly" book.

### "Story Telling"

The teacher read dramatically while students look at the illustrations and listen to the words. Students are gathered around the teacher in a circle of chairs, or on the floor, removed from the environment of the desk. Then, at the end of the story you ask questions to check comprehension. Questions like: who is the main character? Is it happy/sad? what is the firefly looking for?. "*It was looking for another firefly*". At this

point is when we talk about the importance of belonging to a group, in this case, their close group is the family.

Once I have checked their comprehension, I put on the floor different images of the story and my pupils have to order them. The story is very repetitive and every page presents a new vocabulary word following the same paragraph structure. This allows children to recognize and remember the different parts. When we have ordered the story images, children say first vocabulary in order of appearance:: first-a lightbulb; second-a candle; etc. Then I show the story image by image and I will say the paragraph linked with the image and they add the word when I stopped speaking. Finally students do a worksheet of the story. I give them vocabulary images of the story for coloring and cutting out them. Then they have to stick the images in order in another piece of paper and write below the word.

#### "Fill the gaps-Minibook"

Second reading of the story. This time, students read the story with me, just saying the vocabulary word in each page. I invite them to repeat the structure too. Once we have revised the story I give them a minibook to colour and build filling first the gaps with the vocabulary in each page. The minibook has drawings of the story to colour too. When they build the minibook we read first the story to the class, asking for volunteers, and then they do it in pairs.

#### "CLIL-Science lesson"

As I explained in the beginning I have chosen this book because my pupils are now studying about insects in Science. I bring to the class a suitable video about fireflies for their age. In the video it is explained where they live, what their body parts are, apart from different facts as nutrition and reproduction and why its thorax bright. Students are always curious about this kind of facts. After watching the video we revise main facts by asking them and writing their answers on the board. Once all the facts are written on the board we read them aloud. Then, as they already have studied the characteristics of the insects before, they can perfectly identify in a picture of a firefly which its parts are: head, thorax, abdomen, 6 legs, 2/4 wings and 2 antennae. For this purpose I bring to the class a very big piece of white paper with a firefly drawn by me. Pointing its parts students tell me

which ones are. Then one by one write the names in the big paper with a black marker. Then, in pairs, they write in post-its facts about fireflies: it can fly, it lays eggs, it has 4 wings, etc, and we stick the post-its around the firefly in the poster after they read its post-it to the class. We hang the poster on the English wallchart.

### "CLIL-Art lesson"

To final the first book project we are going to do an art class. For this purpose students have to do a firefly with colour cardboards. We have to do the head-green; the wings: brown and orange, the thorax brown and the abdomen-yellow. We add 2 antennae, eyes and nose, as in Eric Carle' butterfly. Children stick the different parts once they have cut them out. I have prepared previously a sky scene with dark blue paper, bright stars and the moon. When students finish their work they stick the firefly in the sky. We hang it on the English wallchart.

## **CONCLUSION**

Literature has a special relevance when teaching English as a foreign language, because it brings you the opportunity to connect with students through imaginary worlds that, most times, are more related with our closest society than we imagine. The familiar contexts of the stories, the relative short length of the story, the multiple levels of interpretation of the story, and the supporting illustrations that aid understanding, provide a strong rationale of integrate children's books into the foreign language curriculum.

In this essay, I have explained briefly how to work on reading through the use of children's books in the FL class. At the same time how to contribute to the Reader Centre Plan, whereas children learn about science and art, designing suitable activities taking our students level as a starting point. This has allowed me to work on different disciplines, looking at the interdisciplinary character of Education and at the same time on my pupils. multiple intelligences (Gardner 1991). In the same line, the RD 126/2014 defines, by the recommendation of the European Council, seven Key Competences where cultural and linguistic competences have a special relevance in here. Our D 82/2014 establishes as a stage objective (f), to acquire in at least one foreign language, the basic communicative competence that allows students to express and understand simple messages and to develop in everyday situations.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Krashen, 1982. Principles and Practices in Second Language Acquisition.

Butler and Trubil, 1987. Towards a Reading-Writing Classroom.

Power-Miller and Hubbard, 1991. The Heinemann Reader: Literacy in Process.

Harwayne, 1992. Lasting Impressions: Weaving Literature into the Writing Workshop.

FORMARTE