

Hands-on Activities to Foster the Use of English

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June 2017



Abstract

This action research project focuses on the effects of using hands-on activities in a first grade of 34 students in a public elementary school. To find out students learning styles and multiple intelligences strategies visual and kinesthetic material was taken into account to support lessons following the topics of first grade syllabus. This study states the importance of including students' interests, realities and needs in order to create an environment that invites them to use English at the same time they learn by doing. The findings suggest that kinesthetic activities and tactile and visual materials can be effective to improve learners' linguistic skills.

Key words: Hands-on activities, visual style, tactile and kinesthetic abilities.

Degree Requirement

This action research report is submitted as a requirement of the Bachelor of Education in Teaching Foreign Languages (English-French) at the School of languages, Universidad de Antioquia.

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Preface

When I decided to carry out my project in this public elementary school, I realized that it was going to be a hard work due to the lack of material and government interest to provide primary schools with enough human and physical material. Nevertheless, during the observation stage day by day, I shared a lot with students and I also developed human aspects. They taught me that with love and engagement changes can be made.

At *Julio Arboleda* School some students have specific needs and lack of commitment from their families. However, both students and I took advantage of this experience. Besides, learners are so young and it was a main challenge working on writing and reading aspects. To sum up, I really appreciate the fact of contributing to children's learning process especially in a subject such as English that mixes linguistic and cultural awareness.

Context Description

The *Francisco Miranda* school (*IEFM*) is a public institution located in Medellin, in *Miranda* neighborhood. Since its beginnings the school was intended for boys: *La Escuela de Miranda Novena de Varones*, it was inaugurated in mid-1931; but only in 1974 it becomes a mixed school. The institution has three academic shifts serving about 2700 students in total, distributed in two locations: *Julio Arboleda* (pre-school to third grade) and *Francisco Miranda* (fourth to eleventh grade and adult education). The different educational levels offered by the institution are: pre-school, elementary school, middle school, high school and adult education (*CLEI*) *Ciclos Lectivos Especiales Integrados*.

According to the mission, the school aims to contribute to the development of holistic human beings in a personal, academic and social perspective; the promotion of values and the transformation of the family and social environment as leaders based on respect and constant interaction with the community. Therefore, the educational model suggests a teaching practice as “*modelo humanista social integrador*”.

Among the *Julio Arboleda* facilities and resources, there are seventeen classrooms distributed in the first and second floor of a unique building, also, there are several bulletin boards, only one of them in English. Besides, there is a dining area and a restaurant. The school’s playground is large and is shaped like an L with a football sports field. Moreover, up the stairs we can find the coordinator office, the teachers’ lounge and the computer room. Finally, a playroom fitted with a big TV screen that can be used with a computer, a DVD and also video beam is available. It also has some games but few materials in English, as dictionaries and books. In general, the material is likely old.

In order to conduct the action research, I am doing my practicum with a 1st grade and students have to attend two hours of English lessons a week. According to the program the main objective in first grade is expanding vocabulary as well as greetings, family, numbers from 1 to 20, geometric shapes, colors, fruits, toys and some animals. Our classroom is located on the second floor, the illumination is good enough. In addition, there is a big (and old) poster about values, according to the institution’s principles. But, it seems to me that there is not a single poster, image or message that invites to the use of English. Lastly, next to the composed board

(white and traditional) is the teacher's desk. The sitting arrangement is a traditional layout and there are sixteen double desks for the students.

Regarding the group, there are thirty-four students between 6, 7 and 8 years old. All these learners who live in neighborhoods as *El Bosque*, *Moravia* and *Campo Valdés* are from Medellín and belong to low socioeconomic strata 1 and 2. Concerning the language level, they are totally beginners; they do not have any basic skills. Furthermore, students seem to be motivated to learn and participate. Besides, most of the students are respectful with their classmates and both me and my CT. Although, some learners talk a lot, get distracted and constantly complaining about everything.

The homeroom teacher is a young woman and she has a BA in Elementary Education Teaching of the *Universidad Tecnológica del Chocó Diego Luis Córdoba*. She has been teacher for 20 years and she has lived in Medellín during seven years, she comes to the city to offer better professional opportunities to her family. However, she states that teaching to young learners is demanding because they have some specific characteristics. Regarding her methodology is a traditional one and she teaches reading and writing by means of *planas*. In some cases, students have to identify a letter copy and paste it. My CT suggests me to work on coloring and drawing skills.

Statement of the Problem

After two months sharing and teaching English classes with a first grade in a public school in Medellín, I identified an issue related to the use of English. I could notice that students have very limited opportunities to explore, understand and practice English at school. I strongly believe that the main objective of teaching English to young learners should be to provide them with plenty of opportunities; not only oral and written activities, but also creating and doing things in order to discover and develop students' competences. The most relevant issues from the lessons taught in this group are described below.

Firstly, lessons were constantly interrupted due to student's misbehavior. Furthermore, discipline is not the main goal of my CT. That affects the class and the learning process. The CT states, "*Ellos tiene buen comportamiento en término general, son dinámicos, alegres, colaboradores, con mucha disponibilidad para aprender*". (CT Interview, February 13, 2017). Nonetheless, I think it is necessary to implement strategies in order to control discipline and to guide the development of learners' communicative skills. In some cases, students seem not being

motivated or interested in the class activity. For this reason, it's necessary to provide them with opportunities to participate in a positive way in English classes. An example of such constant misbehavior can be observed in the following journal entry reflection.

Instead, other learners were not engaged and wrote only two numbers with their names. Some of them were talking a lot with their neighbors and I had to call their attention. Some were noisy and outside their places and I had to control them immediately, if not they would be interrupting constantly the class and the work of their classmates. (Journal entry #2, February, 13th 2017).

Secondly, students demonstrate restricted English background. In kindergarten English was not part of the program and the previous teacher was not competent in English. In addition, student's proficiency is low because student's language exposition at home is not enough; unfortunately, some environments are not suitable to foster English learning. In the following journal entry, it is observed how learners' English level is diagnosed. "The activity was to evidence if learners could cope with topics such as numbers; and as a matter of fact, their English level is limited. I can state that for these learners this is the first contact with a foreign language". (Journal entry #1, February, 6th 2017).

Thirdly, English syllabus is entirely vocabulary-centered. As the first grade program is all about vocabulary acquisition, lessons could move around a similar set of activities: presenting, writing, repeating and memorizing vocabulary. Instead, I think language learning atmosphere should promote also creativity, interaction and production. In my own view, English teachers should engage learners to the usage of various abilities in real language activities while using new vocabulary raising student's social and linguistic potential.

As a matter of fact, learners have a lot of energy and activities should be attractive enough to stimulate participation and minimize disorder. Moreover, the interaction with space, objects and materials more than naming vocabulary could help learners' comprehension and appropriation of language in a more spontaneous and creative way. On a survey conducted on February 13, 2017, 65% of learners expressed they did not know anything about English, 96% of children expressed that modeling with clay is the activity the love the most. Also something they enjoy doing in their English classes is watching videos 93%, drawing, painting and coloring 90%.

While singing, writing and speaking English 62%. As a result, most students prefer visual material and definitely tactile activities.

As a result, if we take into account learners' characteristics when planning lessons, it could be possible to foster students' potential by plenty activities focused on learning styles. That is to say, taking into account multiple intelligence children have. Students will have further opportunities to develop competences in English and practice vocabulary by doing something. In my opinion we can promote learners English level by proposing visual and kinesthetic oriented activities dealing with vocabulary topics in English classes.

Theoretical Framework

According to the information found in the observations, a student oral survey and an oral teacher interview during my experience as a student-teacher with first grade, my main concern was focused on the limited opportunities students have to use, practice and improve their English level. Consequently, this action research project report aims to promote plenty of activities that involve not only cognitive aspects, but also, senses, movements, kinesthetic elements and visual aids in order to encourage learners' participation and English performance. What is more, classes and topics should be related to one another as much as possible, and their content should be articulated with social environment, student's preferences and interest, in other words, according to learning styles.

In like manner, in English lessons with first graders at *Julio Arboleda* School, I will focus on the use of hands on activities based on student's characteristics. Hence, I will mention some concepts that will guide my project. In the first place, I will present an outlook of multiple intelligences theory and its most relevant aspects. In the second place, I will discuss about the implications of effective English learning regarding VAK and learner's styles. Finally, I will expand on the Experiential Learning Theory, allowing, in this case, the different strategies and pedagogical aids I can use as a teacher to improve children's learning environment. I really want to guide them to develop their abilities and competences in this elementary English course.

MI Theory and its Most Relevant Characteristics

The theory of multiple intelligences, mainly established by psychologist Howard Gardner in the 80's, postulates that people have eight (maybe more) autonomous intelligences. Individuals manifest those intelligences as well as individually and collaboratively, in order to create products and solve significant problems in a given society. (Gardner, 1983, 1993, 1999, 2006b, 2006c as cited in Christodoulou, Davis, Gardner, and Seider, 2011). According to these authors the core of multiple intelligences theory is that there is not one single intelligence, but multiple autonomous intelligences. In this perspective, there are a set of particular human faculties and abilities that together form our minds.

For this project, not only the linguistic aspect will be significant, in teaching to young learners it is essential the use of the space, the implementation of physical and visual materials, and physical capacities students have in order to increase student's opportunities to practice L2 and actively participate in their language acquisition process. In the following fragment, Gardner (2006) presents his concept on some of the multiple intelligences he has coined to define human intellect:

“...is described as consisting of a set of semi-autonomous computational devices, each of which has evolved to process certain kinds of information in certain kinds of ways. Some of the intelligences –for example, linguistic and bodily-kinesthetic– obviously entail motor capacities.” (Gardner, 2006).

As it was said before, the most significant author who has described that intelligence is not one single kind but at least 8 different forms of intelligence is Howard Gardner. In 1993, he emphasized the relevance that bodily-kinesthetic and verbal linguistic intelligences have in the cognitive development of young kids. Gardner (1993) shapes that “body movements in humans extend to the use of tools; the movement of the body follows a clearly defined development in children.” He also highlights the importance of language and arts or visual-spatial intelligences. [] ...“the gift of language is universal, and its development in children is strikingly similar in all the cultures.” Moreover, the visual arts employ spatial intelligence. That is why I find interesting the combination of those ways to process information to enrich explanations, activities, games and productions, all together lead learners to learn by doing.

Learning Styles Advantages and Benefits

It seems to me that taking into account students' tendencies or preferences and the congruence between learning styles and other theories should contribute to learning effectiveness. Dörnyei (2005) as cited in Kim and Lee (2014) remarks "six types of mismatch between learning styles and other learning-generating factors that cause learning difficulties in practice: mismatch between learning styles and teaching styles, the syllabus, language tasks, learners' beliefs about learning, learning strategies, and learners' abilities." He argued that some sort of style harmony would be beneficial in many respects for teachers and learners alike.

Likewise, Cohen (2002) as cited in Kim and Lee (2014) suggested that learning styles is a flexible manner to combine the best of language issues, learning abilities and preferences. "Students can become more skilled having a more complete knowledge of their learning, because they are invited to make use of multiple leaning styles for more effective language learning." In my opinion, students enjoy visual and tactile oriented activities in a different way than writing vocabulary.

Broadly, language learning styles bring up how students retain and retrieve information, knowledge, and skills in language learning conditions. Another description of learning styles is provided by Andreou, Andreau, and Vlachos (2008) which discuss the ideal and preferred mode a learner perceives, organizes, and retains information. This idea is influenced by Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, ELT published in the 80's. Kolb suggests four learning styles: divergent, assimilative, convergent and accommodative. Learning preferences operate in two dimensions and are the result from a tendency to learn thanks to concrete experience or over abstract conceptualization.

VAK

Visual, auditory, kinesthetic are three learning modalities in education. According to Barbe and Swassing, (1979) as cited in Cummings, (1992) learning style theory is viewed as one way to expand educational methods to engage students, even those who misbehave. In other words, this approach affects both learning and teaching processes. Regarding learners' styles, students who have a preference for visual texts learn by this channel. Rather than visual channel, auditory learners like listening or reading procedures. If students prefer kinesthetic activities to

learn, they will enjoy being involved by touching the stimulus or responding by instructions and movements. Furthermore, visual methods consist on the use of any kind of visual aids like: flashcards, posters, books, chalkboards, and charts. In addition, auditory teachers use to teach by explaining, also perform complementing activities like audios and songs. Kinesthetic teachers enjoy an active methodology with physical immersion and games, dances, musical instruments, and "hands-on" skills.

The VAK or VAKT learning styles refer to the use of specific sensory receivers: Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic and Tactile. Those items describe some preferences about learning styles theory. Taking into account a person strengths is a complement of multiple intelligence theory which is one perception that expands learning styles, skills, and learning and teaching possibilities; ELT and VAK models suggest different procedures about student's conscious and unconscious ways of study and learn. VAKT learning style theory does not defeat Kolb's or Gardner's theory. Instead, this theory offers other outlook about the benefits of taking into account a learner ideal way of thinking, processing data and learning. (Alan Chapman, 2005-2012 as cited in Bagheri and Gholami 2013).

Students' skills can be enhanced if their inclinations and interests are taken into account during a lesson. For me, education is a process of dialogue and interaction. Likewise, visual learners need written directions, and they like to read a lot, which means individual work. Visual learners prefer to see the stimulus as well as videos, movies and bulletin boards. Auditory learners enjoy learning by the oral channel. Students usually require only oral instructions. They participate in conversations, discussions, and group work oriented tasks are essential. (Oxford, 1995 as cited in Bagheri and Gholami, 2013). Further, kinesthetic learning style consists on total physical involvement. Besides, the inclusion of the environment in activities such as role play, dramatizing, interviewing, taking a field trip, or pantomiming. As well as tactile learners who use their hands to learn. Concepts are accompanied by the manipulation of materials and resources, such as modeling, writing, drawing, building things, what is more conducting lab experiments. (Kinsella, 1995, as cited in Bagheri and Gholami 2013).

Kinesthetic

The brain always perceives images and generates thoughts. I strongly believe that the visual sense and the kinesthesia add information about the world, and then we can learn and discuss about a specific experience or creation. While children do something it is possible to expand verbal and non-verbal knowledge thanks to the integration of senses and actions.

In addition, planning a lesson with various interesting activities for young learners can be more beneficial than proposing written and reading exercises. Wankat (2002) as cited in Savino (2015) indicates that several research works point out the importance of schedule activities and change constantly to one another because of the average of student's attention span, which is around fifteen minutes. This proposal of a lessons composed by non-passive students and short activities are said to improve learning environment.

Kinesthetic is also called Active Learning and is largely used as an instructional method recognized for involving students in their learning process. The objective is that learners need to be conscious that they are doing and learning something, they should remark the experience of having an active role on their learning process. In order to achieve the required results students are aware that success will depend on what they actually do (Bonwell and Eison, 1991 as cited in Savino, 2015). I consider relevant the active role of learners at school, for me it is essential that students feel proud of what they do and the awareness of participating inside the classroom, and on its process, mainly, if our expected outcome is the use of English, and that they can acquire knowledge while doing, practicing and using vocabulary through different activities.

Encouraging students as active learners in their process of learning a foreign language seems to be a good idea in order to promote the use of it. Astin (1993) as cited in Savino (2015), describes that kinesthetic learning involves teachers whose principles take into account environment and willing learners who react, interact and create situations. Besides, research studies show that learner's involvement is a key factor of an effective learning experience.

The body can learn through tactile sensation. When touching, we learn about our body and the world around us. Thanks to the body contact and the awareness of spatial location, we can recognize information that offers new figures of objects (Beauchamp, et al. 2005). In this perspective I will use the set of previous concepts to combine grammatical and linguistics aspects, at the same time, if young learners learn by doing and using senses, they can improve

their behavior, concentration, self-esteem and autonomy as well, not only as students but also as social beings.

Experiential Learning Theory (ELT)

All kind of experiences students have can be opportunities and strategies to promote games, oral interaction or tactile skills. According to Armstrong and Li (2015), based on the foundations of “Theory of Experience” described by Dewey (1938) and Lewin (1951), Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory (ELT) is interpreted as a process in which knowledge is the result of an individual experience. “Knowledge is created through the transformation of experience”. Nonetheless, a learning experience is transformed when students do any requirement and reflect on it.

An effective learning is when learners combine different modes of learning grasping (Concrete Experience –Abstract Conceptualization) and transforming the experience, (Reflective Observation –Active Experimentation) feeling-thinking and watching-doing. In fact, all social and learning experiences are different, not all of us progress in the same way in all the dimensions of knowledge previously mention.

In order to enhance student’s roles in the class, motivation and engagement with the foreign language, it is ideal to offer them a different dimension of knowledge in which they can learn through their senses, the world, the reflection and the transformation of their experiences in contrast to traditional lessons based on language issues. The strategy is to use hands-on activities based on learner’s styles to foster the use of English.

Hands-on Activities

Hands-on games or activities are situations in which students manipulate and touch materials. The difference with ELT is that hands-on activities don’t require reflection about the production and the experience. Learning by using the senses is something wonderful especially for children. Learning through touching requires simple activities such as coloring, drawing, modeling, using clay, scissors, realia, doing puppets and art craft in general.

Learners can enjoy of the class in different ways, mainly those with visual and kinesthetic inclinations. As Shin, J. (2014) states children can learn better through activities that incorporate

senses. During this kind of activities teachers have students motivated and involved. It's possible to link the knowledge and real situations with the environment, in other words, with the world. Including physical objects to touch and feel and combining multisensory activities is learning in a different way. Teacher should use different strategies in order to encourage learners, as cited in Parra (2016) it is necessary to use new strategies and resources in order to stimulate, encourage and reinforce learning, then students will have a meaningful and fulfilling experience (Carrillo et al. 2012).

I found appropriated all previous theory with student's age, interest and potential of first graders. Amstrong (1999) as cited in Sangsongfaa and Rawanga (2016) suggest in agreement with the MI theory that each subject can better develop his intellect if the learning process is previously organized in a suitable way.

Research Question

To what extent can the implementation of hands-on activities foster the use of English in a first-grade group at a public school in Medellin?

General Objective

To provide students with opportunities that promote the use of English through hands-on activities.

Specific Objectives

- Identifying the most suitable strategy derived from multiple intelligences to promote students' engagement.
- Designing lessons that involve visual and kinesthetic learning styles to encourage student's English interaction.
- Implementing hands-on activities that can enhance learners' participation and performance in the target language.

Action Plan

With the aim of promoting the use of the language during the English lessons, the set of actions I will carry out through this research project is as follows:

- Through the lessons, it has been observed, that verbal linguistic, visual-spatial and bodily kinesthetic intelligences are to be favored so that learner's engagement towards the English class is improved. In this way students will pay attention to explanations and will follow instructions easily.
- According to the Vocabulary Oriented Syllabus proposed to first grade at *Julio Arboleda* School, I will design attractive lessons for children with many activities that involve touching, visual and kinesthetic learning styles to encourage student's participation and improve English interaction.
- In order to enhance learners' participation and performance in the target language, implementing activities related to hands-on activities will be a must. Choosing different material to work with and creating new contextualized materials that can have them take advantage of their dominant intelligence forms.

The data collection instruments I will focus on for the development of the actions will be: Journal entries are an evidence of daily experiences and situations. It is important to register week by week the main events of lessons, as well as students' reactions about the activities. The journal is a personal analysis, focused on actions and reflections. Besides, an oral student's survey, learners will answer two individual surveys. One survey at the beginning of the project and the last one will be at the end of it; in order to evidence possible changes on students' backgrounds, preferences and opinions. To sum up, an interview to the cooperating teacher to know her view on the issue.

Development of Actions

I started implementing my action plan after the observation period in *Julio Arboleda* School. After revising the school syllabus, I did a re-accommodation of it; I organized the topics in a way I could relate each other using recycled vocabulary. Likewise, I structured my action plan according to learners' English level, oral and written skills. Different materials were collected to be presented and used during the lessons, I designed and adapted some of them.

Through the lessons I focused my attention on students' language (oral and written) proficiency. As a fact, it was not the best level. Nevertheless, the mixture of bodily-kinesthetic

and visual exercises based on linguistic aspect involved students to use elements of the environment to identify and create relations based on the English topics. In each class students had to do at least two or three activities. As the syllabus proposes mainly the acquisition of vocabulary, it was always presented with visual material; we worked it with flashcards and stickers. Also in the notebook, we did some written lists.

Besides, we drew a lot, we learned colors vocabulary and painting and coloring activities were very useful to the interpretation of new concepts. Children enjoyed doing things by themselves or hands-on activities like the puppet of the family and doing shapes with a model. I tried to review concepts learned constantly and gave students the opportunity of participating actively during English lessons.

The impact of kinesthetic and visual activities as well as student's involvement characteristics and learning preferences in addition to students and teacher opinion were considered regarding effective learning processes.

Finally, the use of hands-on activities through reusing recycled materials was a great source of possibilities that involved and engaged kids into the English learning. They were able to link materials that they usually manipulate in other subjects in the English class: paper bags, cardboard, ice pop sticks, carton cylinders, among many others.

Finding and Interpretations

In the implementation of this research project four instruments were used to collect the requested data. Firstly, a journal was done. I used this tool for planning my lessons, writing and reflecting facts during my practicum process. Secondly, I took into account the report of the advisor teacher about the lesson observed, since her point of view on the possible categories is very important. Thirdly, other instruments were the oral surveys I applied to the students in order to know their perceptions and interests. Finally, I applied a short interview to my cooperating teacher to know her opinion about learners' acquisition process. When I compared and analyzed the information obtained in the different data collection three categories emerged. Next, I will describe them:

Visual Learning Styles and Visual Material

Since the beginning of the project I observed that the method of my CT was using dictations and writing exercises to practice spelling. All lessons were lecture-oriented classes and all the activities consisted on written exercises and material was always the same: board, pencil and notebook. It seems to me that education is a subject of social awareness and contextualization of needs. For this reason, traditional pedagogy is not enough for preparing students to the real world. So, we need to change the paradigm of ancient teaching and learning. As Gardner (2007) states, as cited in Graham and Vega (2013), formal education sometimes has students mainly involve for the world of the past, rather than offering them ideas and tools for the present and the world of the future.

Students always were engaged with the use of physical and visual material as it was seen in the journal entries:

“I encourage students to look around and recognize shapes inside the classroom. They love to use visual aids, recognize objects and interact with the space.” “they love the result of the shapes colored because “it looks like a Colombian flag” (Journal entry, March 13, 2017)

In fact, young learners have a lot of potential and I think that including the visual channel has an advantage. Learners can link the language and the environment. Then, I presented and we practiced the topics through visual material and that improve learners’ expectations and motivation during lessons. I would like to state that visual material like flashcards, videos, worksheets, copies, posters, colored paper, cardboard, even the art craft which is attractive to look at supports children learners’ styles.

“I show family flashcard to present vocabulary. Besides, to call students attention, I constantly do questions such as: Is a boy or a girl? Students seem to be concentrated, they recognize family characteristics through visual aids, learners love family images”.

(Journal entry, March 6, 2017)

Likewise, the teacher advisor on the observation report refers to the visual material like this: “Teacher presents a set of flashcards: CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, RECTANGLE, OVAL, DIAMOND, STAR, and HEART which children should repeat after the teacher. She also promotes children using English vocabulary they know to describe the shapes, for example, the colors and numbers.” (See appendix A).

Similarly, learner’s opinion about the kinds of activities they preferred is manifested as it is shown in figure 1:

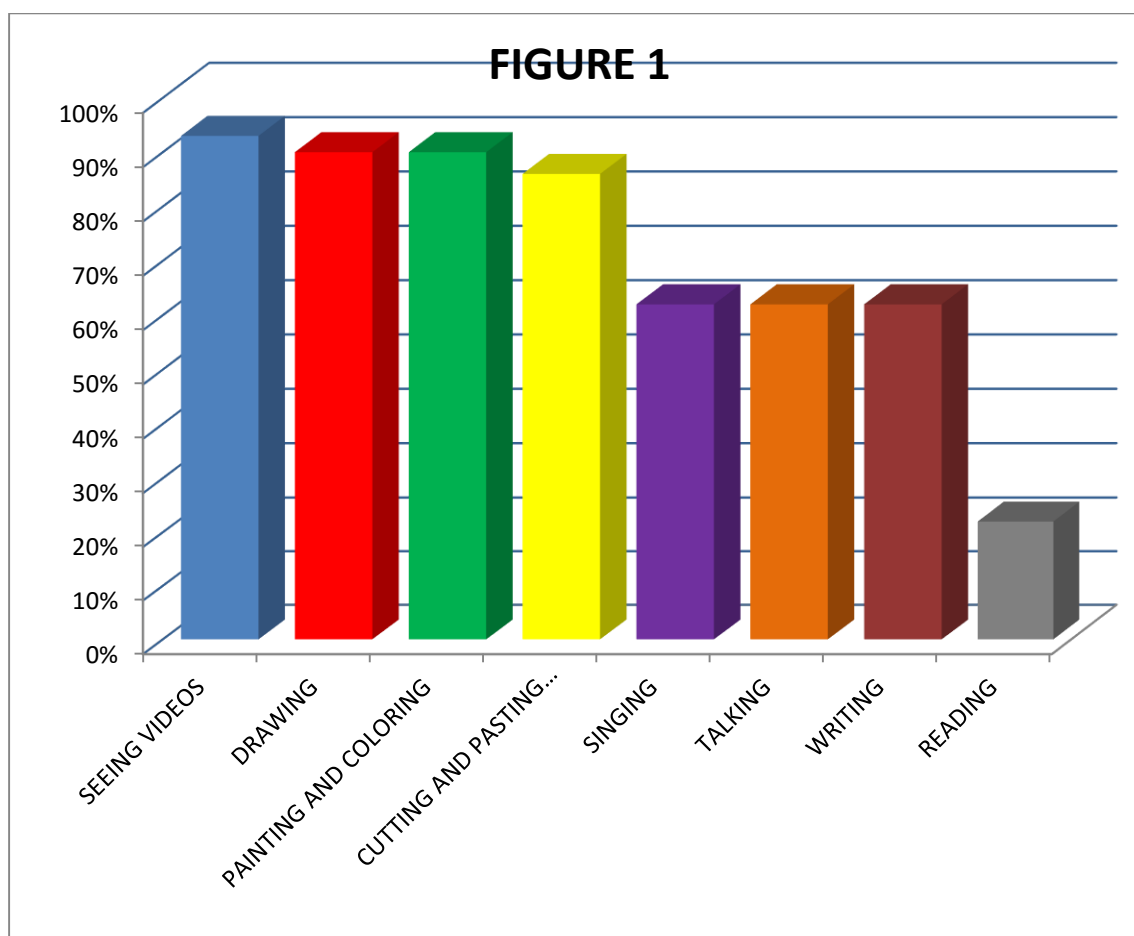


Figure 1: Survey question: In which activities you learn English better? (Student’s survey 1, February 13, 2017)

Thanks to the different visual aids learners can associate and create relation between the vocabulary learned and the environment. At the same time, we broke the traditional routines with

lessons that offer students more chances to expand the way they learn and improve their English production with attractive material for kids.

Kinesthetic

Teaching a foreign language to young learners requires the use of different approaches that favor the acquisition. I agree with Dickinson (2010) in some principles: young learning depends on what children experience, active learners try to construct meaning, they need space for linguistic growing, improvement can be seen as internalizing from social interaction. So, school is ideal for developing not only academic knowledge, but also human aspects that will be useful for children's.

In order to take advantage of learner's likes and abilities, lessons included also the kinesthetic learning style and kinesthetic multiple intelligence. The activities based on movements and commands invite learners to express themselves through body actions. After doing these activities they understand in English what teacher is demanding. When I asked students about their favorite games 35% of them state: "*Correr – chucha cojida*" (Student's survey 1, February 13, 2017). Which means that run and move is pretty suitable activity for them. Apart of having children's opinion the advisor teacher adds: "Students' motivation towards hands on activities and commands performance was used in a very effective way and as a result most Kids were working effectively towards the task" (See Appendix A)

Kinesthetic activities like following commands and singing and moving encourage learners to recognize common oral expressions and commands related to linguistic concepts of the English class and at the same time it was a strategy to work on behavior because these activities called completely their attention.

"In the playground students have the opportunity to make a brief presentation and participate in some ice breakers saying the name and doing a movement. We played Simons says, and students really love to move, run, jump and follow instructions about doing something." (Journal entry, February 6, 2017)

On the other hand, it was necessary to adapt the material according to learner's level and interest in order to enhance students' performance. Besides, kinesthetic learning style is also proposed thanks to the appropriation of concepts through tracing, writing, drawing and coloring tasks. In addition, learners love drawing and coloring as states in figure 1.

“Indeed, I can observe that some students are motivated and concentrated with this activity. They have talent to draw, and they enjoy using colors and creating new details.” (Journal entry, February 6, 2017)

Definitely, the experiences in which students can use tactile material improve their positive role in the classroom. Learning by doing was an effective option to increase the use of English because while learners manipulate material they interact with it and the space, being closer to concepts, and feeling the necessity of communicating in the foreign language:

“I chose a participant and blindfolded their eyes I put on her or his hand a school implement aiming that through touching the learner guessed what it was. The idea is to review this previous topic and practice this vocabulary.” (Journal entry, February 13, 2017)

“Everyone shows his/her different skills with tactile activity and creativity; it was amazing. Students are motivated, concentrated in doing the puppet and they also are using color and family English vocabulary.” (Journal entry, March 6, 2017)

The teacher advisor considers that the material used is adequate to foster students engagement with the class “Materials and activities selected for this review lesson were appropriate and let kids be actively involved all the time” (See appendix A).

“According to the card we should use the stick to form the shape of the picture, following the order of colors and using vocabulary in English, learners know what to do with the material and they want to demonstrate they have learned something in English.”(Journal entry, March 27, 2017)

“Learners are engaged and they love the stickers and the riddles game, they participate and most of them follow the rule of raising the hand to answer.” (Journal entry, April 17, 2017)

The CT also realized the importance of including materials in lessons as a kind of activity toward students can better use English: “*Los estudiantes recuerdan más facil las cosas en Inglés con materiales que ellos pueden manipular, con recortes, con canciones también, a ellos les gusta mucho el Inglés.*” (CT oral interview, May 8, 2017)

Positive attitude and active learning

At the beginning of the project student’s attitude was not the best. Additionally, their role in the class was not the expected. They were passive learners and that narrowed their academic development. 65 % of students said they did not know anything about English and 69% affirmed they do not use English at school. (Student’s survey 1, February 13, 2017)

“I explained the instructions for the main activity and I drew a big number 1 on the board and a short writing exercise to practice spelling from one to five: one-one-one. Learners had to do the same on their notebooks. Some students wrote in a very messy way and I insisted in the order and showed them how to do it.” (Journal entry, February 13, 2017)

Although in the observation stage and the first classes students did not have the opportunity of participating in classes and misbehavior was a disadvantage for being engaged in learning process, after applying the strategies proposed students improved their behavior and their linguistics skills.

“The most important advantage of this activity is that students are engaged and behavior is very good. Sometimes I have to suggest more concentration while coloring and not leaving white spaces. Learners finish quickly and we paste the copy on the English notebook.” (Journal entry, March, 13 2017)

Nevertheless, when taking into account students’ interest and needs, they can participate in a different way on their learning process. The implementation on Multiple Intelligences in contrast to the use of writing and reading oriented activities, allowed the active role of students during the lessons. What is more, behavior, motivation and participation improved.

The advisor teacher talked about the active learning: “Students’ motivation towards hands on activities and commands performance was used in a very effective way and as a result most

kids were working effectively towards the task and were using English words and expressions to communicate ideas”. (See Appendix A)

Moreover, CT considers that students have acquired concepts in English as follow: “*claro que sí, han aprendido muchas palabras de los números, de las frutas, de la familia*”. (CT oral interview, May 8, 2017)

Conclusion and suggestions

The application of hands-on activities and the use of visual material had a positive effect in the first grade classroom at *Julio Arboleda* School.

Theory studied was very useful to support the structure of the English course. My first conclusion is that children progress was significant and at the end of the project they not only acquired vocabulary and ideas in English, but also they experienced a different kind of learning. This process provided with materials and topics attractive for them allow students to participate actively during lesson and communicate using English. The role of tactile and visual materials as well as the activities around them was a remarkable issue to engage and motivate students. Indeed, they learn easily and enjoy doing things by themselves, they were proud of their productions and that satisfied me. Students acquired linguistic and others useful skills as coloring, cutting and pasting thanks to the manipulation of materials.

Secondly, as activities and material were appropriated for students learning styles they were more engage in lesson. Class participation reinforces student’s active role and behavior improved a lot. Students love both collaborative work and individual task. They also shared materials and knowledge and that is a meaningful experience. Finally, my main suggestion to work with first grades is planning carefully plenty of activities using a sort of materials and leave students to be themselves, giving them the opportunity of crate and use knowledge.

Reflection

During my actions research project there were not obstacles, definitely, it is a rewarding experience for me because I felt I contributed to the language acquisition and lecture development of children. Personally, I found pleasant results of the academic process and personal growing of students. Moreover, I tried to take advantage of many aspects of this experience as group management and pedagogical strategies to work on English topics. After a lesson I reflected on facts in order to correct it in future lessons. To conclude, I am happy because at the end we have a pleasant and friendly environment.

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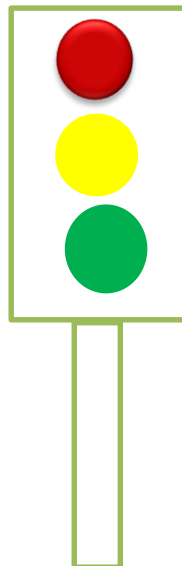
Appendix A

Class Observation Report

**UNIVERSIDAD DE ANTIOQUIA
ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS
PRÁCTICUM II
OBSERVATION REPORT**

School: I.E. Francisco Miranda, S. Julio Arboleda	Teacher: Karla Peña
CT: Zoraida Córdoba	Observer: Lina Londoño
Grade: 1st grade	Date: March 27, 2017

1. Class had to take place in the library since the library was affected with the weekend's heavy rain.
2. The library has been adapted so students can have the class: there is a TV set, chairs and 2 small boards.
3. Teacher begins the class by singing a "Hello" song After introducing the observer. All students participate singing and saying hello to the observer.
4. Reviewing time. Teacher uses Spanish to have Kids review all prior contents; she continues with today's date by pronouncing it with Kids. She also shares with them and explains today's agenda. (She does not write on the board because the available one is too small.
5. Teacher presents a set of flashcards: CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, SQUARE, RECTANGLE, OVAL, DIAMOND, STAR, HEART which children should repeat after the teacher. She also promotes children using English vocabulary they know to describe the shapes, for example, the colors and numbers.
6. Teacher asks Kids to take out their English notebooks; then she dictates what they are to do: draw a red heart, blue triangle, red circle, yellow circle, Green rectangle, etc. So the final drawing should look like this:



While Kids are working, following the instructions, teacher goes around checking their work and helping them or correcting mistakes. She also grades this first activity they do for reviewing all prior knowledge through the use of hands-on activities.

7. Teacher has all Kids keep their school supplies and starts with instructions for the following activity. They review some body parts and perform some commands. Then teacher presents some materials they are going to use: paper cups in different colors that contain icepop sticks in the corresponding cup color. They are given instructions on what to assemble: red triangle, green square, etc. Teacher has one girl to come in front of the class and demonstrate what is to be done. There are many different options to do: yellow and green rectangle, a house in yellow, blue and red, etc.
8. Children should do the activity in pairs and teacher goes around handing in materials so they work together by assembling the colored sticks into the given shapes or options they have. She names some assistants who should go around with her providing their classmates with the colored icepops. When they are in the middle of this activity, students and teacher should move to their classroom which is finally ready to be used. Both teacher and CT provide with instructions so Kids do not go crazy while moving from library to the classroom and they take their time organizing everything there and children actively and happily finish the activity in the classroom.

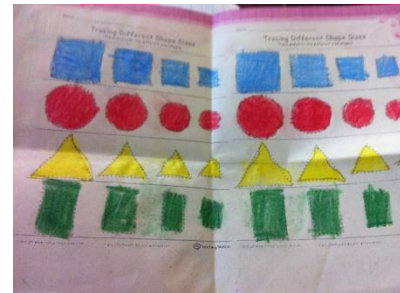
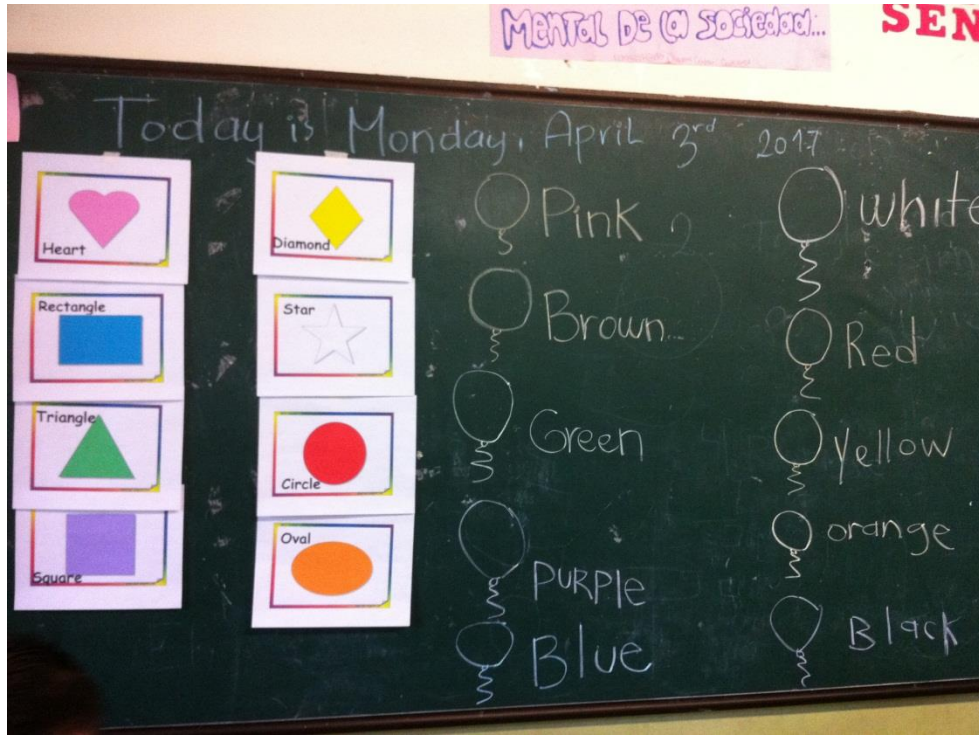
Analysis

1. There are good class routines that help these young learners to be engaged in their learning process through the English class. (song, date, commands, agenda)
2. The necessary demonstration is provided so learners are able to cope with the task.
3. Teacher uses prior knowledge to activate students attention and participation in class.
4. Materials and activities selected for this review lesson were appropriate and let Kids be actively involved all the time.
5. The class' pace was effective for having the Kids busy and attentive most of the time.
6. Students' motivation towards hands on activities and commands performance was used in a very effective way and as a result most Kids were working effectively towards the task and were using English words and expressions to communicate ideas.



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Appendix B



Appendix C

