Chapter 7

Project for the Global Integration of Meaningful Learning of English in Early Childhood Education

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ABSTRACT

This study is based on the premise that learning English has become a necessity in an increasingly globalised world, and that its teaching is simpler and more effective from an early age, offering better results. Based on studies related to the subject, this project has been conducted on various aspects such as current teaching in so-called "bilingual schools" or the influence of the family and new technologies on the use of routines in the teaching of pupils in the early childhood education stage. This chapter defends the application of a leading project based on new methodologies that share an eminently practical and interactive approach and that manage to involve all the agents related to the education of pupils, incorporating the necessary resources to facilitate linguistic immersion. All of this is aimed at achieving an improvement in the results of language teaching. The general objective of this chapter is to present a globalised teaching project that generates significant learning capable of achieving comprehensive training in English in early childhood education pupils.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter responds to the need to ensure that students are able and competent to cope in an increasingly global, plural, and changing world. Languages are becoming increasingly relevant in aspects such as employment, where in many fields English has taken on a decisive role, becoming a fundamental requirement for access to certain jobs. For this reason, there has been growing concern in recent years, and it is clear that the demand for English language learning in schools in Spain has soared (García, 2021).

There has been a large-scale conversion to bilingualism in schools. The first bilingual programmes in public schools appeared in 1996 thanks to an agreement between the Ministry of Education and the British Council, establishing an integrated Spanish-British curriculum for children from 3 to 16 years of age. But, given the lack of uniformity in the implementation of bilingualism in schools, the number of hours to be taught, the qualifications and/or knowledge of teachers, etc., it is difficult to comment on the situation of bilingualism in a generalised way. In broad terms, at the Early Childhood Education stage, it is usually treated as a first approach to the language according to López and Rodriguez (2019). However, this proposal aims to highlight the importance of starting the teaching of English from an early age.

The main aim of the project is to turn the language into an instrument that is given greater practical applicability. The aim is to reduce the use of textbooks as the only resource in the teaching of English, encouraging the use of language to achieve a greater fixation in the mental scheme of the pupils, extrapolating it to their daily reality. We also propose to include Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) as they provide very useful and motivating resources. Language training is included for all teachers, not only specialists, as well as for families, to improve their competences, the achievement of objectives and motivation.

The innovative proposal of this project seeks to promote meaningful learning and is born out of a double need: to acquire the vocabulary and structures of the language while integrating routines through activities carried out in daily practice, which fosters confidence in the students. The use of English in the child's everyday tasks becomes an effective tool for language fixation, and once they have acquired sufficient security and confidence, the pupils will move on to a second phase of oral production.

The general objective of this chapter is to present a globalised teaching project that generates significant learning capable of achieving comprehensive training in English in Early Childhood Education pupils. The specific objectives are the following:

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