Picture Book as a Tool for Encouraging Inclusive Values among Children: Picture Book Typologies and Teaching Activities Using these Publications

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Abstract: Children’s picture books are a very effective language that provides models for children to identify themselves through images. This paper verifies the extent to which these publications represent diversity and, in any case, the current reality. To do so, we focus on the study of picture books that transmit values of social inclusion from different points of view: gender equality, multiculturalism, disability, and respect for “the difference.” A research and an analysis of the albums published in Spain during the last ten years have been done on the basis of these four categories. This communication shows a selection of albums from different categories and typologies, and practices that can be used to promote values of equality and inclusion in children from six to nine years old. These activities are an example of the potentiality of children’s picture books to transmit these values, and they will serve as a starting point to generate a whole catalogue of activities available to schools.

Keywords: Picture Book, Inclusive Values, Primary Education, Diversity

Introduction

This article collates part of the analysis and results obtained during the first and second stages of R + D Project HAR2014-53168-P, Multiculturalism and Social Exclusion in Images for Children: Illustration and Pedagogy, funded by the Spanish Ministry of the Economy and Competitiveness. This project focuses on children’s picture books as a complementary tool to textbooks for teaching children about inclusive values with regard to the following: defending gender equality, accepting and integrating multiculturalism and disability and, in general, respecting diversity.

In our country, there has been a rapidly evolving concern for educational values since childhood as in many developed countries. This concern is reflected in the laws that define educational programs, whose application requires political, economic and social factors. To educate children in a society where different cultures and realities have their place, with an open mind, it is necessary to offer educational materials that represent this reality and diversity from a young age. This is the only way to prevent the loss of inclusive values that lead to discrimination of certain sectors of society. In this research, the picture book is presented as a material that contributes to this education in values.

The project is organized into three fundamental stages: 1) Research and analysis: finding children’s picture books published in Spain over the last ten years, since the project was launched in 2005, which address the inclusive values described above. They can be from any publishing house but must fall into the category of picture book. The sample is analyzed on the basis of syntactic and semantic variables collated in a database to facilitate subsequent extraction and analysis of research results. 2) Designing teaching activities: on completion of Stage One, work will begin on designing teaching activities using these picture books. These activities will be

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undertaken in various schools located in Granada and Valencia, working with children aged three to nine years old. 3) Field work: practical implementation of the activities designed. The same teaching activities will be proposed in all participating schools. Each year will have its own selection of picture books and activities appropriate for the age group of the children involved. Outcomes of activities will be recorded and then analyzed so that conclusions can be drawn to evaluate the capacity and potential of these publications for conveying the inclusive values we seek to instill, which is the fundamental objective of this project.

**Theoretical Framework**

Picture books can be defined as short, quality publications in which images take precedence over text, although both elements are equally important. What sets picture books apart from other illustrated books is that in the former, illustrations carry much of the narrative responsibility. “In most cases, the meaning emerges through the interplay of word and image, neither of which would make sense when experienced independently from the other” (Salisbury and Styles 2012, 7).

The power of images in how children perceive the world around them is undeniable. Stereotypes in illustrated books often influence children more than the reality they live in (Turin 1995). Since its beginnings at the end of the nineteenth century, the picture book has been presented as a product for children to enjoy and for adults to collect. In spite of this recreational facet which sets picture books apart from formal teaching material, they have always had an educational value. In many cases from the 1960s onwards, we can say that picture books have also taken on an ideological angle which remains in place today (Orquín 1998).

Historian and writer Adela Turin started her outstanding work back in the 1970s. In 1975, and with the aim of speaking out against sexist discrimination in children’s literature, she set up the publishing house Dalla parte delle Bambini [In Favor of Girls]. In 1994, she set up the European Association Du côté des Filles [In Favor of Girls], which researches and flags cases of sexism in educational material in addition to creating awareness-raising tools for the publishing industry, institutions, and the general public. The results of her research confirmed that the female models used were based on classic stereotypes and did not reflect real situations (Cromer and Turin 1998).

It is crucial for publications for children to portray a social and cultural reality with which boys and girls can identify, and which furthermore help them to develop as freer, more tolerant individuals. Picture books are an extremely useful means of conveying messages and knowledge during childhood, given their predominant use of images. If we look at early childhood, their relevance is greater still, since images are the only means children have for extracting meaning from the story. “Not yet able to read, small children tirelessly examine the illustrations in books and soon learn to decipher their meaning” (Turin 1995, 11). In addition, the fundamental characteristic of picture books that makes them differ from other illustrated books is the interplay between word and image, where both media complement each other in creating a new meaning. Margaret Meek (1988; Salisbury 2012, 90) uses the word “interanimation” to suggest the dynamics of words and pictures in their actions upon one another. The communicative power of images, along with the complementary and sometimes even contrapuntal relationship created between image and text (Nikolajeva and Scott 2006), is what leads us to call for picture books to be used for educational purposes during early childhood.

Over recent years, different pieces of research have been carried out on images for children and how they reflect sexism, multiculturalism, and repeated stereotyping (Hidalgo 2002; Hidalgo and Pertíñez 2005). We have now expanded our research to include the notion of inclusion with reference to different types of “disability”, and the notion of “being different” in general, shown in picture books, which have a role to play in teaching about non-exclusion.

In this article, we set out the results of the analysis of the books examined in the first stage of the project, highlighting the limited representation of some categories and/or picture book
typologies compared with others. We furthermore offer a significant number of children’s picture books that convey the inclusive messages that interest us, and that have been analyzed in terms of their content in order to distinguish between different typologies. Lastly, we describe some teaching activities designed using these picture books, intended for use in schools at a later stage.

**Finding and Analyzing Picture Books**

In order to undertake this research, ninety children’s picture books have been used, published in Spain from 2005 to the present time. These books were chosen from among the hundreds of books examined in libraries and specialist bookshops. The resulting books were analyzed and recorded in a database with thirty-five variables, organized into three sections: data record, technical analysis, and analysis of content (Hidalgo 2015). In this paper, we focus primarily on story-line content variables and the messages they convey.

**Categories Defined in the Analysis**

The picture books included in our study are organized into four categories. The first one is Gender Equality, books that, in a direct manner, defend the equality of the masculine and feminine genders. The second category is Multiculturalism, books that show the need for multiculturalism and equality among human beings, ignoring questions of race or culture. The third one is Disability; our intention is to include any kind of disability here, whether it be physical, sensory, or intellectual. Finally, the category Being Different, where we include picture books that do not fit into the previous categories and that deal with difference in a person, animal, or object that hinders their inclusion in society.

In the following graph, we can see the percentages of the books analyzed according to the categories described. The chart below shows the degree of representation of each category in the sample analyzed.

![Figure 1: Number of Picture Books in Sample by Category](Source: Hidalgo 2017)

Figure 1 shows that picture books in the “being different” category make up the largest part of the sample, accounting for 50 percent. This category is followed by “multiculturalism,” with 25.6 percent; and then by “disability,” with 16.7 percent (where the sensory disability stands out). “Gender equality” brings up the rear, with 7.7 percent.
The low number of picture books that directly address gender equality shows how criticism of the sexist attitudes to which children are exposed has currently been pushed into the background, although equally it reveals the continuing need for these kinds of publication, given that the majority of them have been repeatedly republished. Of the seven picture books found, five are re-editions of works published in the seventies, eighties, and nineties (four of which are by Adela Turin).

**Picture Book Typologies by Category: Description and Percentage in the Sample**

Upon completion of the picture book research and analysis stage, we looked at the story lines presented in the picture books so as to examine in depth, and by category, the messages and values they convey. We then analyzed each book’s message, and highlighted the different typologies used to show the difficulties experienced by some individuals when trying to feel included in our society.

We identified up to nine different typologies in the picture books included in the “being different” category:

1. **Examples of diversity.** (Nine picture books). There are different scenarios: books that portray characters who are diverse and odd, but who manage to live together perfectly well, or who experience just the same feelings as anybody else; books with characters typically found in classic tales, such as princesses or wolves, but with atypical attitudes or in atypical situations; and books themed on unusual family or relationship setups.

2. **Difference as something positive.** (Seven picture books). These books show us the advantages that being different can have, using different resources: the most common is using this difference to save somebody’s life, in addition to using imagination, having fun, and even turning the disability into an ability that other people do not have.

3. **Main character’s acceptance of their difference.** (Seven picture books). The main character has some minor defect or characteristic typical of their species that they do not like. In either case, the character ends up understanding that this is not important and that life has plenty to offer them. This is achieved by building up their self-esteem; or through love, when the main character falls in love and forgets all about their small defect; or simply through friendship.

4. **We are all different, and we are all special.** (Six picture books). Each child is different, each child has their own rhythm, their own way of developing, and their own idiosyncrasies. Moreover, there are books that emphasize that this diversity is good, that everybody is the way they are and should not fixate on being something they are not.

5. **Union or friendship between two very different beings.** (Four picture books). Two people or animals who are very different from each other become friends, or even a couple. For this to happen, they need to accept each other and adjust to each other.

6. **Putting ourselves in someone else’s shoes.** (Four picture books). Books that invite us to see life from the other person’s perspective so we can understand their attitude, problems, or needs.

7. **Fear of the unknown.** (Three picture books). Society rejects people who make us uneasy because they are different or unfamiliar. In the end, this individual is accepted when we get to know them and realize that they are no threat.

8. **Standing up for the right to be different.** (Three picture books). The main characters want to stand out from others; they do not want to be the same as all the other members of their species.

9. **Everyone has their place in life.** (Two picture books). We need to find our niche, where we fit in, so that we can be happy. It is important that each of us find his place in life.
Regarding the “multiculturalism” category, we identified up to ten typologies:

1. **Examples of differences that demonstrate the similarities between us, regardless of race or culture.** (Six picture books). Books that focus on the differences between us and show that they are really quite incidental when we look at the fundamental values of humans, which are what make us all the same.

2. **Emigrating.** (Four picture books). These books deal with adapting to the new society in the destination country, or the fusion that comes about when setting up a new family in the new country.

3. **Fear of the unknown.** (Three picture books). The same typology as described in the previous category.

4. **Rejection based solely on difference.** (Two picture books). A variation on the typology described above. Anything different is rejected simply because it is different.

5. **Union between two very different beings.** (Two picture books). Stories in which two animals from very different species get together and form a couple. Love is what makes them want to be together and not care that they are different from each other.

6. **Standing up for diversity and multiculturalism.** (Two picture books). To live together peacefully, we do not all have to be the same. Diversity and multiculturalism are enriching.

7. **Showing diversity through fostering a series of different animals.** (One picture book). A story about a boy who travels the world, meeting different animal species along the way and inviting them to come home with him and live in his house.

8. **A mother’s love does not care about races or cultures.** (One picture book). This picture book tells the story of an adopted boy who comes from a different country than his mother.

9. **Accepting ourselves as we are, shown by the main character.** (One picture book). The main character in this story does not accept her skin color. She is a little black girl who wants to be white like her father, not black like her mother. She finally realizes that if she were white she would not be herself, she would be someone else, and that her family loves her just the way she is.

10. **Calling for everyone to be treated equally, from all perspectives.** (One picture book). This is a highly original picture book that uses humor to criticize the expression “colored man.”

We identified three different typologies in the “gender equality” category:

1. **The woman rebels to demand the same rights as the man.** (Five picture books). The female figure is subject to the man’s decisions about what she can or cannot do. She is thus responsible for doing all the housework and bringing up the children and, in some cases, all the routines she must do to keep herself physically attractive. The woman becomes tired of this situation and rebels against it, either by leaving home or starting to act as she pleases.

2. **Standing up for the right to decide, regardless of gender.** (One picture book). This book shows how a boy is discriminated against by his classmates simply because his tastes are not the same as theirs.

3. **Criticism of gender inequality in some cultures, but showing how it can be overcome.** (One picture book). The social injustices suffered by some girls in certain cultures are criticized, particularly when combined with poverty (in this case, the Hindu culture).
For the “disability” category, we show different typologies according to the type of disability identified in the analysis.

A. Physical disability; a single typology:
1. **How the physically disabled adapt in society.** (Three picture books). In the three books, their main character moves around in a wheelchair due to reduced lower-limb mobility. They accept their limitations, but make the most of what they are able to do.

B. Sensory disability; we identify three types:
1. **The world as perceived by a blind person.** (Three picture books). These books describe the particular way a blind person perceives their surroundings. It offers us a new vision of the world that only blind people can have.
2. **Showing us the special abilities that blind people have.** (Three picture books). These books focus on the abilities that blind people have, which enable them to live normally and offset their visual impairment.
3. **Rejection simply because of difference.** (One picture book). The difference presented by a disabled person is viewed negatively because it is not familiar. When we get to know a disabled person and understand their situation, we accept them.

C. As regards intellectual disability, we identify a single type:
1. **The main character’s special needs are shown and the features that make them special are highlighted.** (Five picture books). These picture books focus on the positive features of individuals in this group. They show these special characteristics as something interesting and necessary.

**Selection of Picture Books from the Sample Analyzed**

Once we have studied the picture books in terms of their story line and main messages, we will make a selection from among them that will serve as the basis for designing the teaching activities used with children in schools. This does not mean that the stories we have excluded are not valid, but simply that we have to place a limit on the field work. To draw up this list, we will consider equally the different picture book categories and the different typologies within the categories, with a view to ensuring that the definitive list is as rich and varied as possible.

**Picture Book Typologies per Category and Percentages in the Sample Analyzed**

Before setting out the list of picture books chosen, and to make it easier to use the highly diverse typologies obtained, we offer below a table that summarizes the different typologies identified, organized by category and showing their percentage in the sample.
Table 1: Picture Book Typologies per Category and Category Percentages in Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
<th>TYPOLOGIES</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender equality</td>
<td>The woman rebels to demand the same rights as the man.</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standing up for the right to decide, regardless of gender.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
<td><em>We’re all the same, it goes beyond race or culture.</em> Done by: showing how incidental differences actually are; through emigration and adapting; the union of two very different beings; or overcoming fear of the unknown.*</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Rejection because of difference:</em> showing the injustices caused when we reject someone because they are different.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Standing up for multiculturalism:</em> Accepting multiculturalism as something positive and necessary.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>Physical: <em>Showing how a physically-disabled person adapts in society.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sensory: <em>The world as perceived by a blind person.</em> <em>Showing us the special abilities these people have.</em></td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intellectual: <em>Showing the special needs of the main character and highlighting the features that make them special.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being different</td>
<td><em>Showing social and cultural diversity.</em> Using different formulas: people, relationships, or cultures which differ from our norm; union or friendship between very different beings; focusing on the advantages of being different; or inviting us to put ourselves in someone else’s shoes.*</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>We’re all different.</em> Done by: showing difference as something positive; by means of accepting difference; or making us see that we’re all special.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hidalgo 2017

List of Picture Books Selected

We set out below the twenty-four books selected from the sample for each school year of children aged from three to nine years old, along with the category, typology (main message), and values highlighted in each book. The selection criteria used take into account not only the variety of categories and typologies, but also aesthetic and content quality. Regarding aesthetics, we took into consideration originality and artistic execution (Hidalgo 2013), and as regards content, we took into consideration richness of image-text interplay (Nikolajeva and Scott 2006; Hidalgo 2015), and literary critique as per Colomer (2002).
Table 2: Picture Books Selected for Each School Year to Design Teaching Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>BOOK</th>
<th>CATEGORY/TYPOLGY</th>
<th>VALUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Elmer. [Elmer. David McKee, Beascoa, Barcelona, 2008]</td>
<td>Being different/We are all different: difference as something positive.</td>
<td>Friendship-Self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I Don’t Want To Be an Octopus! [¡No Quiero Ser un Pulpo! Francesca Chessa, OQQ, Pontevedra, 2012]</td>
<td>Being different/We are all different: difference as something positive.</td>
<td>Friendship-Self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Fishing Trip.[Un Día de Pesca. Béatrice Rodriguez, Libros del Zorro Rojo, Barcelona, 2012]</td>
<td>Multiculturalism/We are all the same, ignoring race or culture: union of two very different beings.</td>
<td>Love-Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>Up Above and Down Below. [Los de Arriba y los de Abajo]. Paloma Valdivia, Kalandraka, Seville, 2009]</td>
<td>Multiculturalism/We are all the same, ignoring race or culture: showing that differences are actually incidental.</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Name of the Whale. [El Nombre de la Ballena. Marcelo Birmajer and Marta Villegas, Economics Cultural Fund, Mexico, 2009]</td>
<td>Multiculturalism/We are all the same, ignoring race or culture: showing that differences are actually incidental.</td>
<td>Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Lion in Paris.[Un León en París. Beatrice Alemagna, SM, Madrid, 2007]</td>
<td>Multiculturalism/We are all the same, ignoring race or culture: showing that differences are actually incidental.</td>
<td>Solidarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catherine, the Bear and Peter [Catalina, el Oso y Pedro. Christiane Pieper, Kalandraka, Seville, 2007]</td>
<td>Physical disability/Showing how a physically-disabled person adapts in society.</td>
<td>Friendship-solidarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Swimmy. [Nadarín. Leo Lionni, Kalandraka, Seville, 2010]</td>
<td>Being different/We are all different: difference as something positive.</td>
<td>Friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Little Blue and Little Yellow. [Pequeño Azul y Pequeño Amarillo. Leo Lionni, Kalandraka, Seville, 2005]</td>
<td>Multiculturalism/We are all the same, ignoring race or culture: overcoming fear of the unknown.</td>
<td>Friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kitty and the Snow. [Gatito y la Nieve. Joel Franz Rosell, Kalandraka, Seville, 2012]</td>
<td>Multiculturalism/We are all the same, ignoring race or culture: showing that differences are actually incidental.</td>
<td>Friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superheroes. [Superhéroes. Roberto Aliaga, Anaya, Madrid, 2011]</td>
<td>Being different-Disability/We are all different: difference as something positive.</td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>Butterfly Ears. [Orejas de Mariposa. Luisa Aguilar, Kalandraka, Seville, 2011]</td>
<td>Being different/We are all different: difference as something positive.</td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Other Paul. [El Otro Pablo. Mandana Sadat, Kókinos, Madrid, 2008]</td>
<td>Being different/Showing social and cultural diversity: friendship between two very different beings.</td>
<td>Friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lorenzo’s Saucepan. [El Cazo de Lorenzo. Isabelle Carrier, Juventud, Barcelona, 2011]</td>
<td>Intellectual disability/The main character’s special needs are shown and the features that make them special are highlighted.</td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Piggybook. [El Libro de los Cerdos. Anthony Browne, Economics Cultural Fund, Mexico, 2012]</td>
<td>Gender equality/The woman rebels to demand the same rights as the man.</td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>BOOK</td>
<td>CATEGORY/TYPOLGY</td>
<td>VALUES</td>
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<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td><em>Arthur and Clementine</em>. [Arturo y Clementina]. Adela Turín, Kalandraka, Pontevedra, 2012</td>
<td>Gender equality/The woman rebels to demand the same rights as the man.</td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Adelaíde</em>. [Adelaida]. Tomi Ungerer, Kalandraka, Seville, 2014</td>
<td>Being different/Showing social and cultural diversity: showing different realities personified, in relationships or cultures.</td>
<td>Overcoming-Self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The War of the Numbers</em>. [La Guerra de los Números]. Juan Darién, OQO, Pontevedra, 2009</td>
<td>Multiculturalism/We’re all the same, ignoring race or culture: showing that differences are actually incidental.</td>
<td>Friendship-Peace-Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Close Your Eyes</em>. [Cierra los Ojos]. Victoria Pérez Escrivá, Thule, Barcelona, 2009</td>
<td>Sensory disability/The world as perceived by a blind person.</td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9</td>
<td><em>Titiritesa</em>. [Titiritesa]. Xerardo Quintiá, OQO, Pontevedra, 2007</td>
<td>Being different/Showing social and cultural diversity: showing relationships which differ from the norm.</td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>One and Seven</em>. [Uno y Siete]. Gianni Rodari, SM, Madrid, 2007</td>
<td>Multiculturalism/We are all the same, ignoring race or culture: showing that differences are actually incidental.</td>
<td>Solidarity-Peace-Friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Edmund</em>. [Edmundo]. Ingrid Chabbert, Kökinos, Madrid, 2015</td>
<td>Being different/Showing social and cultural diversity: showing people and relationships which differ from the norm.</td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Planet Willy</em>. [Planeta Willy]. Birte Müller, Takatuka, Barcelona, 2015</td>
<td>Intellectual disability/The main character’s special needs are shown and the features that make them special are highlighted.</td>
<td>Positivity-Understanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


That one type of picture book has a higher market share than others justifies its high presence in the list we ultimately selected, since supply dictates that there are a higher number of quality book in certain categories. In the selection of picture books, there are consequently more picture books in the “being different” and “multiculturalism” categories than in the “disability” and “gender equality” categories, but the selection offered is nonetheless highly varied when we take into account all the typologies that we can find in each category.

**Teaching Activities for Field Work Designed on the Basis of the Picture Books**

To design the activities that will be used in the schools (the Genil and Mª Luisa de Marillac Schools in Granada, y La Anunciación School in Valencia), picture books must be selected from among the sample analyzed in such a way that this stage is viable in terms of the time and resources we have available. We ultimately selected twenty-four picture books from the sample analyzed, bearing in mind the categories and typologies identified, so that the selection would be as varied as possible. The selection includes four picture books per school year (school years from third year Infant to third year Primary), allowing teachers to choose from among them the picture book they prefer for their class.
The school activity will focus particularly on the creative and artistic nature of these publications, with scope for pupils to draw and invent their own stories, drawing on the picture book’s visual and narrative facets alike.

As regards the method used in both Infant and Primary Education levels, we will follow the ideology of Willi Vogt (1979) in Metallo and Ruiz (2012), based on experiences and play activities within a trusting, caring atmosphere for facilitating and stimulating pupils’ self-esteem and social integration.

**Infant Education Level**

Research will apply to the second cycle of the Infant Education level (children aged 36 years old). Our basis will be the general objectives for this educational stage set out in Royal Decree 1630/2006 (OSG no. 4 of January 4, 2007), laying down the minimum curriculum for the second cycle of Infant Education, which fit the aims of this project. This Royal Decree specifies that during this stage, pupils must learn to respect differences, develop their affective skills, and relate to others in such a way as gradually to learn the basic rules of harmonious social relationships and non-confrontational conflict resolution. Furthermore, pupils must start learning skills in the areas of logic and mathematics; reading and writing; movement, expression, and rhythm. It is during this stage that pupils start learning to read and write, and we shall therefore place emphasis on the visual, leaving the narrative in the realm of oral expression and help from the teachers.

**Primary Education Level**

Seven key skills are laid down in Primary Education, considered vital for achieving the wellbeing of European societies, and provided for under the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (Spanish acronym ECD) Order no. 65/2015 of January 21, 2015, which describes the relationships between skills, the content and the assessment criteria for Primary Education, compulsory Secondary Education and Sixth Form Education (OSG no. 25 of January 29, 2015). We highlight two of the skills described, since they relate directly to the aims of our project: social and civic skills, and cultural awareness and expressions (the other skills are related to the learning of mathematics, science and technology).

Although priority is given to key skills of learning mathematics, science, and technology in this stage, we can also see that basic, fundamental skills for harmonious living and development of the full potential of individuals are valued.

We shall work with children aged 69 years old in the Primary Education stage, and therefore the activities proposed may be more complex and involve reading and writing activities.

**Basic Structure of Teaching Activities**

The basic structure of all the activities proposed will comprise three essential parts:

- Pre-test: the stage prior to reading the story. An activity will be carried out that will enable us to verify what knowledge pupils have about the concepts to be worked on.

- Reading the story: after the story has been read by all pupils, assisted by means of its projection on a screen, they will be invited to think about its content by answering their teacher’s questions and in this way, arrive at a meaning shared by the class as a whole.

- Post-test: activity after reading. Once the picture book has been read, an activity will be suggested that will reinforce the concepts worked on and serve to test or evaluate the activity.
Teaching Activities: Types and Some Specific Examples

For this article, we have decided to describe some of the teaching activities designed in order to give consistency and closure to the work process defined up to this point. To ensure that the selection is as representative as possible in terms of the work developed during this stage, the activities described have been chosen taking three variables into account: that the four categories in the sample analyzed are represented, that the activities cover the different educational levels we are working with, and lastly, that they are based on the four strategies used for designing these teaching activities, which we explain below.

Teaching Strategies for Designing Activities

After all the teaching activities (twenty-four) have been completed, analysis of the results shows that we have used up to four different strategies for designing activities in terms of resource used. The most used strategy (thirteen examples), is the one that focuses on the fundamental story line set out in the book. In the second one, values and qualities are recognized through ourselves, through a third person, or through an animal (seven examples). The third strategy uses one of the key elements in the story (two examples). Finally, we distinguish a fourth strategy where the messages or values conveyed by the story are worked on by means of an artistic activity (two examples).

Teaching Activity Summaries

Set out below are short descriptions of each teaching activity selected by way of example, two for Infant level and two for Primary level.

A. Teaching activity for Infant Education (3–4 years old) using the picture book Elmer (McKee 2008)

This activity uses the strategy “the book’s main story line.” This picture book falls into the “being different” category and, within this category, the typology “we are all different: difference as something positive.” The fundamental values conveyed are friendship and solidarity.

Among the essential aims of the exercise, we want to help children understand that we are all different, and that this difference can take many forms beyond race or culture. Children must understand and accept that each person is the way he/she is. In addition, we want pupils to appreciate diversity as something positive, necessary and creative.

Prior to Reading

Before reading the story, children will be asked to draw an elephant. When they have finished their drawing, they will be asked to describe it and say what it makes them think about. It is important to tell the pupils how long they have to do their drawing (ten to fifteen minutes), and to write their name and age on their drawing (if they cannot do this, their teacher will help them). To do their drawing, children will have drawing material to hand and plenty of colors available. As drawings are finished, they will be stuck to the classroom wall and the child will define their elephant in the terms described above. We shall make a note of each reply on a Post-it note, which will be positioned above each drawing.
Reading and Understanding the Picture Book

The story will be projected onto a screen and read out loud by us or the teacher, since children in this age group are not yet able to read. Once we reach the end of the story, a dialogue will be started with the children to check that they have understood its message. Dialogue can also take place during the reading. The book can be discussed by asking the following questions: How is Elmer different from the other elephants? Why does Elmer decide to leave the herd one morning? What does he decide to do to be like all the others? Does Elmer manage to be like all the others? Why do the elephants laugh when Elmer shouts “Booo!”? Is being a different color a problem for Elmer? Do you think we can find these differences in our lives? Do you know people who are different from other people? Why are they special?

Activity after Reading

Pupils will be asked to draw another animal (not an elephant) which is different from the others, and once again asked to describe it and say what it makes them think about. Once they have finished this exercise (around ten to fifteen minutes), each child will stick their new drawing below their first drawing. They will be asked to describe it again in the same terms as before, and their replies noted on a Post-it note. This way, by comparing the children’s two drawings and their answers, we can find out if the child has assimilated the idea of “being different” as something more natural. When the two drawings by each child have been stuck to the wall, they will be photographed as a pair, which we will use later for the analysis.

If there is time, a further activity can be suggested: the whole class makes a big collage from their cut-out drawings, sticking them on a roll of paper and then coloring in the background. This giant jungle scene could be used to decorate the classroom and remind the children just how diverse the world is.

B. Teaching activity for Infant Education (4-5 years old) using the picture book

* Catherine, the Bear and Peter (Pieper 2001) *

This activity uses the strategy “recognizing values and qualities in ourselves.” It falls into the “physical disability” category and, within this category, the typology “shows how a physically-disabled person adapts in society.” The fundamental values conveyed are friendship and solidarity.

The aim of this exercise is to get the children to accept and understand disability in order to be happy with their possibilities or abilities. In addition, we want to encourage helping each other, to favor the inclusion of all the children in the classroom. It is important for children to be aware that we can all do everything if we set our minds to it and work as a team, although we need to identify what each of us might need help with.

Prior to Reading

Before reading the story and working in small groups, the children will talk about and write down (with the help of their teacher) their personal features which make them different from their classmates. They must explain their features (advantages, difficulties, etc.) to the rest of the group. Then, each child will make a drawing of him/herself which shows the advantages and difficulties they talked about. They will also be asked to write their name and age on the drawing. They will be given around twenty minutes to complete this exercise.
Reading and Understanding the Picture Book

Once the first activity has been finished, the story will be projected onto a screen and read out loud. If the children are not yet able to read, we and/or the teacher will read the story. In the same way as with all the activities suggested, once the story has been read, a dialogue will be engaged in with the children to see if they have understood its message, using questions such as: Which figure do you feel most identified with? Can the bear do the same things as the other figures in the story? Can the boy do the same things as the other figures in the story? Have you ever felt that you can’t do the same things as other children? Which of the three figures do you think is the bravest? Could they do all the things they are doing, skipping, dancing, etc., if they weren’t together?

Activity after Reading

Children in the group will, together, invent a story about an activity that all members in the group can do together. They will need to agree on what this activity is. Then, each pupil will draw a picture of him/herself doing this activity. Pupils will have about twenty minutes to do their drawing on their own.

The activity could be lengthened to include creating a collage with each child’s drawings. They would be cut out and stuck to a larger piece of paper so that all the drawings make up a single illustration. Children could also color in and decorate the background. Lastly, each group will be asked to tell the story it has invented using the drawing, and the results will be photographed.

C. Teaching activity for 1st year Primary Education pupils (6-7 years old) using the picture book Piggybook (Browne 2012)

For this activity, we have used the strategy of looking at the messages and values conveyed by the story by means of carrying out an artistic activity. This picture book falls into the “gender equality” category and, within this category, the typology “the woman rebels to demand the same rights as the man”. The essential “value” conveyed is about the woman being brave and confronting problems.

Through this exercise, we want children to become aware of the sexist attitudes which persist in our society and of the need for them to change, specifically by chores being shared between sexes.

Prior to Reading

Each child will make a drawing using different potato prints that he/she has made, helped by the teacher if necessary. The drawing will be freestyle, but a theme will be specified, e.g., to do with cooking. To make this stage easier, projections will be shown of images relating to cooking that the children can cut into their potato easily using a child-safe cutter. It is important for all of the children to take part in all of the activities required in this technique, such as washing the potatoes and cutting them in half, cutting their design into the potato, preparing the paint or printing their design. It is a collective drawing, which requires more time, around thirty to forty minutes.

Reading and Understanding the Picture Book

Once they have finished the print drawing, the story projected onto a screen will be read aloud around the class. Once the reading has been finished, a dialogue will be started with the class to check that pupils have understood the message in the picture book, using questions such as: Why do you think the book is called Piggybook? Why did Mrs. Piggy leave home? What is Mr.
Piggy’s job? And Mrs. Piggy’s? Who does all the housework? Is this fair? Do you think it is important to know how to cook and clean?

Activity after Reading

The children will make a group mural, using all the potato prints they have prepared. A basic outline can be drawn on the paper so that the children can fill it in with their potato prints, and then when they have finished doing this, they can decorate the background. To finish off the activity, the classroom must be tidied up, cleaning up and clearing away everything used in the activity. This is a vital stage for getting the children to see the importance of sharing chores, and we must ensure that each child participates in all the stages.

D. Teaching activity for 2nd year Primary Education pupils (7-8 years old) using the picture book The War of the Numbers (Darién 2009)

Lastly, the teaching activity designed on the basis of picture book The War of the Numbers is based on one of the key elements of the story. It falls into the “multiculturalism” category and, within this category, the typology “we are all the same, ignoring race or culture: showing how incidental differences actually are.” The values it conveys are, firstly, friendship, followed by peace and love.

We seek to achieve two fundamental aims with this exercise: embracing multiculturalism by calling for the same rights for everyone, and appreciating a peaceful culture by showing that war solves nothing.

Prior to Reading

We will write the numbers one to ten vertically on the blackboard, and ask the children to say something for each number, and write their suggestion next to the number (e.g., I have one nose; we have two hands; we eat three meals a day; my bed has four corners; the week has five working days, Mondays to Fridays; an insect has six legs; the week has seven days; an octopus has eight tentacles…). Using this list, we can make children see how important it is to have all these numbers for talking about daily actions.

Then, we will ask the children what their favorite number is, what it makes them think of, and to draw this on the piece of paper they have. The children can choose the materials they want to use for their drawing, and will be given a set time to finish it in (ten to fifteen minutes). Once they have finished their drawing, they will write their name and age on it and stick it on the classroom wall using sticky tape or play dough, describing it to their classmates as they do so.

Reading and Understanding the Picture Book

After the activity, children will read out the story projected onto a screen. We will try to get each child in the class to read a part of it. Questions such as the ones shown below will be used to encourage discussion of the story’s messages and content: What was the world of the numbers like before the war? Was there variety? What is the minus sign trying to do? An army of numbers is getting ready, what is it like? What happens to the different numbers when they start being subtracted? Is it a good idea that number variety disappears? Are the zeros happy? What do they do to get rid of the minus sign? Once they can live together in peace, what happens to the different numbers? Is variety positive? Is it necessary?

Activity after Reading

Children will be asked to make up a formula for their favorite number by adding two other numbers together (e.g., if their favorite number is fifteen, the formula could be nine plus six). Get
them to draw the two figures like little people and invent a very short little story about them, which they write down on their piece of paper. By asking the children to make up these stories, we can check to what extent they tolerate diversity in relationships between two different individuals. Pupils will be given a set time (around fifteen minutes) to do their drawing, using diverse material. Once they have finished their drawing, they will go and stick it on the classroom wall underneath their previous picture, and tell us the story they have invented. At this point, photographs will be taken of the pairs of drawings for subsequent analysis.

Conclusion

Picture Books Categories and Typologies

There are far more picture books in the category we have termed “being different” than in all the other categories, since this is a very wide-ranging notion with room for a lot of different story lines. At the other end of the scale we find the “gender equality” category. The extremely low number of picture books which address this topic directly is due, in our opinion, to the fact that this issue is “outdated” politically and socially, which is incomprehensible given that the problem still exists today. As a consequence, other current issues have taken precedence, such as “disabilities,” but representing one type of reality should not be at the expense of representing another.

The variety of typologies found overall flags the diversity of topics in these picture books, and thus their potential as a tool for studying these values with children. Although the categories with fewer numbers of picture books have fewer typologies, it is worth noting that the “multiculturalism” category stands out in this respect given that its typology variety is larger even than in the “being different” category, ten versus nine, when the number of books included in the “being different” category is twice that included in the “multiculturalism” category.

We could say that current picture books for children are highly topic-diverse as regards areas relating to diversity in terms of respecting and accepting differences in physical appearance, personalities, races, and cultures, but they offer far less as regards areas relating to relationships between couples, alternative family setups, disabilities, and sexism. In this respect, we feel that current realities are not widely portrayed, and not only because we found few picture books that deal directly with these areas, but also because we did not find these realities portrayed in other types of story line. To represent a person in the story who has a physical, sensory, or intellectual disability, they do not have to be the main character in the story. However, when we look at all the figures in the stories analyzed, we do not find disabled people referred to anywhere in the text or pictures, other than in picture books specifically about disability. The same situation happens with sexism; not only are there very few picture books which deal specifically with this social issue, but furthermore, if we analyze the balance of sexes in the picture book sample, we find once again that the male sex predominates, 45.6 percent male characters versus 30 percent female characters (the remaining percentage is disregarded for other reasons).

Values Conveyed by These Picture Books

Beyond the picture book categories, it is interesting to look at the values they use to convey these messages according to what teachers wish to work on in the classroom. Forty-two percent of the books chosen make use of the “friendship” value, then, to a far lesser degree, “self-esteem,” “solidarity,” “peace,” and “tolerance.” We can find the same value in different categories; however, these different categories are linked to certain specific values more than to others. In the “being different” category, it is friendship that stands out, whilst “multiculturalism” encompasses many different values, particularly friendship, love, and peace. The “disability” category also presents a variety of different values relating to self-esteem, tolerance, and advantages, in addition to friendship. However, in the “gender equality” category, the only
“value” we find is women’s courage in confronting the problem; this is essentially due to the small number of these types of picture book in the sample.

**Teaching Activities Designed**

To design teaching activities using the different picture books, our preferred approach was to use the same resource as the book’s story line is based on. This is therefore the most frequently-used resource (thirteen out of the twenty-four activities). We show an example of this with the activity based on the picture book *Elmer*. Nevertheless, it is not always possible to use this resource, due above all to the topic complexity in some books, and this is why other strategies come into play. Significant among these is “recognizing values and qualities” (with seven activities), in which we identify three types: through ourselves, through a third person, or through an animal. The example we set out in this article uses the picture book *Catherine, the Bear and Peter*. Thirdly, we describe the strategy that involves taking one of the key elements of the story to generate an activity (two out of the twenty-four activities), as shown in the example using the picture book *The War of the Numbers*. Lastly, we also used the strategy of looking at the messages or values conveyed by the book by means of getting the children to undertake an artistic activity (two cases), the process and method of which is, in itself, what provides the link to the values set out in the picture book (see the *Piggybook* example).

One of the problems encountered when designing these activities is tailoring them to the target audience. The success of the activity will depend on getting this right, not only in terms of the tasks that the children have to do or the complexity of the content being conveyed, but also in terms of the time required to do them or the children’s ability to manage the materials they are to use.

It must also be emphasized that the picture book genre generally targets a very wide children’s age range, from zero to nine years old. Therefore, according to the child’s level of comprehension, they will read the book differently. Nor must we overlook the maternal or paternal figure who usually reads the book with the child when very young. We organized the books in terms of appropriateness for school years, with a view to the same picture books not being used in classes of different age groups and also taking into account their content. However, almost all of the books selected for Infant level are equally attractive and useful for Primary level. Conversely, not all of the books selected for Primary level would be understood by Infant level pupils. In addition, the older the children the task is designed for are, the more complex it logically becomes, and the children can even invent their own stories using resources such as the ones described in the classic manual *Grammatica della Fantasia* (Rodari 1973). His “fantasy pairing”, or the “old games” described, such as question and answer “Consequences,” are highly useful resources for getting children to invent their own stories starting from specific guidelines.

The activities proposed are merely an example of the potential of each picture book, which offers a wealth of possibilities. Moreover, our activities are designed to be flexible so that according to the abilities of the class or group where they will be carried out, they can easily be adapted to help the target audience understand them and be able to manage them, and tasks in two activities based on picture books of the same type can even be swapped around. It must be borne in mind that our objective *a priori* is to perform the field work in three different schools, one of which is more complex since it has children at risk of social exclusion among its pupils.

These types of publications surprise children with a great variety of topics and new points of view that show a social reality and that, with the help of an adult, can give rise to reflections or debates that lead to the formation of more tolerant and understanding children.

We are sure that these picture books and the activities proposed will be a highly useful resource for studying with children the inclusive values we wish to instill. After we have completed the field work in schools, we will be able to pinpoint any issues and suggest improvements which will facilitate our continued research in this area.
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