Effects of the Implementation of a Tasks Continuity Chain

to develop Vocabulary Ability

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VOCABULARY ABILITY DEVELOPMENT IN PREKINDERGARTENERS

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Abstract

Drilling to teach vocabulary to Prekindergarteners (3-5 years old) at Gimnasio Femenino in Bogotá, Colombia, was not sufficient to assure comprehension, meaning and further vocabulary usage and contextualization. This is why promoting vocabulary ability and turning our classroom into a task-based environment became our research goals. This project fostered input, storage, and retrieval, and progressively engaged students in playing with words to build sentences in context. We named this approach "Task Continuity Chain" based on Task Based Learning – Task-continuity – "chaining of activities". Through its systematic application, it was evident that most of the students improved their performances when supported by parents, and when motivated to learn autonomously, using the tasks continuity chain as a continuum at home.

Key words: vocabulary ability; Task Based Learning; Task Chain continuity – chaining of activities; input, storage and retrieval; early childhood.

Enseñar vocabulario a Preescolares (4-5 años) a partir de repetición de palabras, en el Gimnasio Femenino en Bogotá, Colombia, no era suficiente para asegurar su comprensión, significado, uso y contextualización. Por esta razón, el fomento de la habilidad para adquirir vocabulario y convertir nuestro salón de clases en un entorno basado en tareas se convirtieron en nuestras metas de investigación. Este proyecto promueve la entrada de información (vocabulario), su almacenamiento y uso (McCarthy, 1990), y progresivamente involucra a los estudiantes a jugar con las palabras hasta construir frases en contexto (Willis, 2001, p.129), a través de un método que denominamos " cadena de tareas continua", fundamentado en Aprendizaje Basado

en Tareas – Continuidad de tareas- "encadenamiento de actividades" (Nunan, 1989, p.119). A través de su aplicación sistemática, fue evidente que la mayoría de los estudiantes mejoraron su rendimiento cuando tuvieron apoyo de los padres, y cuando fueron motivados a usar la cadena de tareas en casa, de manera autónoma.

Palabras clave: habilidad para adquirir vocabulario; aprendizaje con base en tareas; cadena de actividades; información de entrada-almacenamiento de información-y recuperación de información; primera infancia.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Starting this project meant to deepen knowledge about what action research involves for practitioners as a general overview: We committed ourselves “to improve our teaching through cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting” (Kember, D., Gow, L. 2004).

This research project was conducted during the first semester of the academic year 2009 – 2010, with Spanish speaking Prekindergarten students at Gimnasio Femenino. This study attempted to introduce a method called '“Task Continuity Chain” whose basis is Task Based Learning – Task-continuity – “chaining of activities” (Nunan, 1989, p.119). The use of such chain of activities was intended to foster English language vocabulary acquisition understood as ‘vocabulary ability which involves more than knowing a lot of lexical items; learners must have ready access to that knowledge and be able to draw on it effectively in performing language-use tasks.’ (Read, 2000). The project elicits positive input (language is ‘written’ in a graphic way), storage (that is held and not lost), and retrieval (it can be called up when need for use (McCarthy, 1990, p. 34).

This study was meant to enhance language use in context, at school and at home. The tasks-continuity chain included the following tasks: memory game, charades, pictograph, online tasks, collaborative sentence building time - pictograph, and retelling sentences time.

Our researchers' roles were observers, active participants, collaborators, and facilitators, enhancing the learning process of vocabulary ability, supported by parents at home to develop autonomous behaviors.

Statement of the problem

After two years of applying a drilling methodology to teach vocabulary to Prekindergarten students, which seemed not to be enough to assure comprehension, meaning and further vocabulary usage and contextualization; promoting the development of vocabulary ability through the use of Task Based Learning arose as a need worth achieving. This is why we faced the need to reflect upon our teaching method, in order to design tasks as a basis to develop vocabulary ability.

This study attempted to introduce our participants (prekindergarten students and their parents, who had just started their academic year of 2009 - 2010) to a method we named '"Task Continuity Chain" which basis is Task Based Learning – Task-continuity – "chaining of activities" (Nunan, 1989, p.119), in which skills are acquired and practiced in one step and extended in succeeding steps. This chain of tasks, according to Nunan (2004, pg. 125), "require learners to undertake activities which become increasingly demanding, moving from comprehension-based procedures to controlled production activities and exercises, and finally to ones requiring authentic communicative interaction." The method we proposed is also supported by Cameron's idea of "producing an environment in which students might be able to meet the demands and achieve language learning goals." (Cameron, 2001, p. 35). Such learning

goals are reflected in vocabulary ability. We took as a basis Vigotsky's vocabulary definition as words that label preliminary concepts which further establish networks of meaning. "In language teaching terms, the development of words, their meanings, and the links between them will be covered under the term *vocabulary"* (Vigotsky, 1962). We also used Read's (2000) definition of vocabulary ability as having ready access to lexical items knowledge, being able to employ them accurately when using language. The use of the Tasks continuity chain was intended to foster this ability.

Research question

The research question of this work is stated as follows:

What is the effect of the implementation of Task-based approach (task continuity through chained activities) on developing *vocabulary ability* at early childhood (3 to 5 years old)?

Research objectives

The project's main objective is:

- The implementation of a method we called Task Continuity Chain, through the use of Task Based Learning - Task-continuity – "chaining of activities" (Nunan, 1989) – to foster vocabulary ability and contextualization.

The secondary objectives are:

- To foster ICT usage through the design and implementation of online tasks that offer the possibilities for students to use Internet and the school's web page, to

be in contact with the vocabulary learned at school and at home, enhancing vocabulary ability.

- To promote autonomy in students, understood as 'interdependence because language development requires interaction' (Little, 1991), accompanied by parents, not implying total independence. However, independent work is intended to be developed by offering tasks to be practiced at home on their own, developing 'the ability to take charge of their own learning.' (Holec, 1981).

This research project is presented in this paper in the following way: First, we stated the problem and research question in the lines above; then, we justified the project in the rationale. Further, in Chapter 2, we provided a theoretical framework for this study, as well as the state of the art, which brought out key concepts that clarified the aim of the study. In Chapter 3, we introduced the research design, with information regarding the type of study, researchers' goal, context, participants, and the description of instruments and procedures used to gather data. In Chapter 4 we described the Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation, steps and processes. Then, in Chapter 5 we explained the Data Analysis conduction and interpretation, and finally, Chapter 6 was devoted to state conclusions, pedagogical implications, limitations found and further research recommendations resulting from this research project.

Rationale

This research was born as a commitment to foster vocabulary ability through the implementation of task-continuity – "chaining of activities" that forms a sequence in which the successful achievement of previous tasks will lead to the completion of the

following ones"– (Nunan, 1989, p.119). This method led students take advantage of designed materials' different applications in order to acquire vocabulary ability. The reason for pursuing this line of research "Collaborative action research" has a basis in a collaborative lesson planning and language learning classroom research, focusing on a qualitative approach with a description of the method to be used, and supported by a quantitative approach with findings about learners knowledge before the pedagogical intervention, what they get to know while the implementation and they actual knowledge afterwards, interpreting the perceptions of students, parents and teachers involved in the planning, and implementation, and the students' overall performance as a result of such implementation.

Searching for strategies to foster vocabulary ability, we read Tanner and Green's, (1998, p.11) list of effective presentation techniques for introducing new vocabulary; such list states that effective presentation techniques should not be long, they should include enough and relevant examples, practice, clear/interesting visuals, drama, clear explanations, contrast with L1, interaction (with each other and with words), be involving, meaningful, amusing, interesting, memorable, dramatic, exciting, have an effective check of understanding, hold attention, and use or link to learners' present knowledge. These features were the basis to reflect on and the reasons why we decided to design and implement a Task-based approach – task continuity method through chained activities – to develop vocabulary ability in our classes. This method meets most of Tanner's and Green's, (1998) techniques.

This action research project's importance relies on the fact that the method proposed promotes students' natural need to play through the tasks' chain (task continuity chain), since "play permeates language" (Cook, 2000, p.99), it is a strategy to foster motivation and learning in preschool students at school and at home. The act of repeating by recalling the vocabulary in every task "allows greater time for processing and creates a generally more secure and relaxed atmosphere which may aid receptivity." (Cook, 2000, p. 30).

Moyle, J. (1989, p.37 cited by Mayer-Tauschitz., I, n.d.) sees the importance of play as an effective medium for stimulating mother tongue development and innovation in language use. This is also true for second language acquisition; it is obvious in the various forms of tasks –games- which can be related to an increase in thinking skills, verbal fluency and sentence building skills that communicative - organizational-grammatical competences develop from one of their components: vocabulary.

Teachers, students, educators, parents, and other members of the community benefit from this experience as follows:

- The school has a research team interested in an investigation about bilingualism. This project will contribute to achieve this school's goal.
- This project requires collaborative action between colleagues to produce co-ownership of materials, higher quality and effectiveness of implemented activities, as resources that could be transferred to other grades or levels. This work will also serve Gimnasio Femenino's Bilingual Areas Team to implement

similar or other types of research, meeting the current students' needs for developing autonomy, using technology and communicate using language.

- One advantage of implementing Task based learning is that it engages the learner in using the language communicatively and reflectively in order to arrive at an outcome other than that of learning a specified feature of the L2, according to Ellis (1994), therefore, students will be challenged to explore the use of language in context.
- Interaction in small groups will increase language practice opportunities within a positive affective climate, motivating learners to participate in cooperative learning. It is intended that these behaviors be re-modeled at home with parents' support.
- Parents, as clue participants in their daughter's learning processes, will be involved in order to measure the effect of the task-continuity at home, as well as to be aware of ICT's advantages as an autonomous learning strategy at this early age, through the use of the students' materials and a follow-up process survey.
- Improvement in lesson planning will be evidenced through the new materials designed by the teachers-researchers, including ICT's and realia since students are in their concrete preoperational stage which is a cognitive consideration to take into account for their design and implementation. (Piaget, 1972). Bearing in mind that the school has implemented technology classes from Kindergarten to 11th grade, leaving PK away from this kind of knowledge, implementing ICT's –

computer assisted learning in Prekindergarten, will help students develop mouse and keyboard training (Brown, S; Earlam, C; Race, P. 1998).

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

Literature Review

According to the nature of our problem, the following language learning and second language learning theories justify the implementation of Task Based Learning to foster vocabulary ability, in Prekindergarten. We intend to look at them through an eclectic multifocal lens as follows:

Looking through the constructivist lens Task Based Instruction, in which according to Ellis (1994), task appears to refer to the idea of an activity designed to engage the learner in using the language communicatively or reflectively to reach an outcome other than that of learning a specified feature of the L2. Ellis (2003) definition evolved: “A task is a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A Task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes. (Ellis, 2003).

In our case, the tasks continuity chain was meant to engage both, productive and receptive skills with emphasis in oral performance when retrieving the vocabulary.

Task based activities involve communicative language use where the user is focused on meaning through a linguistic structure. It offers an alternative for meeting students' needs since it is enjoyable and motivating.

Task based approach will serve us as a construct for our hypothesis. Besides using Ellis' definition, we want to call attention on Nunan's (2004, p.4).: "A task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing the grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right, with a beginning, middle and an end."

The tasks continuity chain we proposed illustrates task chaining or continuity, in which skills are acquired and practiced in one step and extended in succeeding steps. This chain of tasks, according to Nunan (2004, pg. 125), "require learners to undertake activities which become increasingly demanding, moving from comprehension-based procedures (vocabulary cards construction and memory game) to controlled production activities and exercises (charades and pictograph), and finally to ones requiring authentic communicative interaction (collaborative sentence building and retelling sentences time)." The sequence provided in the tasks continuity chain designed illustrates task-chaining or continuity in the sense that the vocabulary ability acquired and practiced in one task, is expanded in the next task, using the vocabulary in different

ways, responding to different students' needs in order to develop the tasks' sequence according to cognitive and performance demands. The tasks have implicit "receptive knowledge" (Nation, 2000) of words which means being able to recognize it, when it is heard: What does it sound like?; What does it look like?; being able to recall its meaning when we meet it and being able to make associations and relations with other words, and "productive knowledge" of words which means knowing how to pronounce a word, how to use it in correct grammatical patterns and how to use it to stand for meaning. (Nation, 2000).

The proposal to enhance vocabulary ability, as a construct, offers opportunities for direct and indirect vocabulary learning (Nation, 1990). 'Vocabulary ability involves more than knowing a lot of lexical items; learners must have ready access to that knowledge and be able to draw on it effectively in performing language-use tasks' (Read, 2000). The Tasks Continuity Chain offers opportunities for direct and indirect learning of vocabulary through having access to it when needed to perform each task of the chain in an effective way. Locke's (1993) understanding of vocabulary acquisition was also taken into account as a support for the study: "The acquisition of the word meanings takes much longer than the acquisition of the spoken form of the words, and children use words in their speech long before they have a full understanding of them" (Locke, 1993). Then, "learning words is a cyclical process of meeting new words and initial learning, followed by meeting those words again and again, each time extending knowledge of what the words mean and how they are used in the foreign language. Each time children meet familiar words again; they too have changed and will bring new first language and conceptual knowledge to the vocabulary" (Cameron, 2001, p. 74). The

tasks continuity chain complies with this cyclical process of meeting, understanding and learning new words, in order to use them as a mean to develop the tasks and to communicate ideas through students' sentence building process contextualizing them.

The tasks focus students' attention on vocabulary, in visual, kinesthetic and oral ways and on the recreational part of the tasks. It relates to Krashen's (1981) input theory of language learning, in which first, "the learners must be interested in understanding the message" (Norton, 1990). The tasks, some of which are used as games, in real-life social events,(memory game, charades, pictograph, retelling stories) motivate learners to understand the message, which is the vocabulary introduced. "Second, the message should contain some items that are just outside the learners' present level of achievement." Students are beginning Level 1-Starting, (TESOL Standards, March 2006) and the vocabulary, which is taken from the Harcourt Program Trophies is just slightly above their present level. "Third, the learners should not feel worried or threatened by their contact with the foreign language." The project takes into account Affective Filter hypothesis as a basis, discussed later on. In their discussion of oral communication development Krashen and Terrell (1983) go along this line when they argue that in early stages of foreign language acquisition, the most important function of the activities is to provide comprehensible input, which includes the development of listening skills. The input should be interesting and relevant to learners to draw them away from linguistic features of language. Another way of helping acquisition is to provide extra-linguistic support which facilitates comprehension. They suggest pictures and realia, but also the use of the learners' knowledge of the world, which helps them to guess the meaning.

Our proposal relates and meets most of Tanner and Green's, (1998 p.11) effective presentation techniques for introducing new vocabulary as follows:

Tanner and Green's Techniques (1998)	**Tasks Continuity Chain's features**
Not be too long	Each task of the chain is short.
Include enough and relevant examples;	Each task and each vocabulary cards set has been enough exemplified at school to be reproduced at home, using relevant examples; Family, feelings, etc.
Include clear/interesting visuals	The task chain includes clear/interesting visuals
Use drama	Drama is used when mimicking.
Include clear explanations	It includes clear explanations in L2 and sometimes it allows students expand on their feelings and thoughts by means of their mother tongue.
Contrast with L1	It allows contrasting both languages (L1 and L2)
Include interaction (with each other and with words)	It includes interaction (with each other and with words)
Be involving	It is involving; vocabulary comes from songs related to topics from Harcourt Trophies program that are related to students' life such as the school, the family...
Include practice	It includes practice, at school and at home connecting physical and virtual learning spaces. Practice is a continuum, since every time a set of vocabulary cards for the different words to be studied are handed in, must be used by students to students add difficulty to the tasks in the chain, e.g. on the second week of the implementation students played with vocabulary cards of words beginning with F and the set for word

	beginning with S, at the end of the implementation students had F, S, M, L, & D sets of cards to play with.
Be an effective check of understanding	It is an effective check of understanding because gives learners real examples of the word's pronunciation, visual representation and use.
Be meaningful	It is meaningful, because vocabulary is needed to play in games, therefore language is needed for communication. Families' involvement engages students affectively and motivates them through parental exemplification, sharing time and willingness to learn.
Be amusing , interesting	It is amusing and interesting because the class is turned into a set of games.
Hold attention	It holds attention because it challenges students.
Be memorable, dramatic, exciting	It is memorable, dramatic, exciting because it involves evocable moments of leisure and education in the family environment, and it connects with web/net elements,
Use or link to learners' present knowledge."	Use or link to learners' present knowledge because is related to their everyday L1 language, only in L2. And to the transferability of L1 to L2 and vice versa.

Looking through the lens of the Behaviorist school of thought: the Behavioral Theory, which main key point is the way "language learning is conceived as a process of imitation and repetition (rote verbal learning, instrumental learning, discrimination learning) of what is heard, that could not proceed without input. This input must be continuous, accurate as an important factor in developing new behaviors" (Brown,

2007, pp. 17-25). It relates directly to our constructs: Task based approach and Vocabulary ability.

In our case, this input consisted of giving the students a set of new habits to be acquired through the practice of the tasks continuity chain, developing vocabulary ability by repeated imitation of correct models of pronunciation (phonics) and related vocabulary words.

Our method's hypothesis includes the use of *Transfer* and r*einforcers*[1] as constructs that serve the Behavioral Theory, applied through task based activities such as playing "memory games, charades, online tasks, collaborative sentence building, and pictograph,." This means that students will acquire habits (recognize, exercise, drill, and recall) through stimuli that will finally allow them use L2 as a response. Continuing looking through a behaviorist lens, the Skill Acquisition Theory (De Keyser, 2001) behavioral in nature, backs up our theory in reaction times, error rates, differences in performance from one condition to another (interferences, such as L1 interference) and accounts of how students progress in learning from initial to advanced. Skill learning has similarities in development through initial changes of behavior to eventual fluency and spontaneity. The method proposed enhances a learning process in which progress is paced, and has a continuous development from simpler tasks to more complex ones that account how learners begin acquiring vocabulary, developing positive behaviors each time, leading them to use words in a more customized, fluent and spontaneous way. The reason to have chosen behaviorist theories relies on the fact that prekindergarten

[1] Transfer: :Habits from L1 used in attempting to produce L2 (Contrastive Analysis-comparing languages).
Reinforcers: Events or stimuli that follow a response and tend to strengthen behavior or increase probability of a recurrence of that response.

students need to build up strategies (games in this case) as habits to develop vocabulary ability, which will be solid bases for them to construct their ideas in a more secure, relaxed, communicative and contextualized way, as they are invited to perform real life learning tasks consisting on challenging activities for the students and their peers to share with their families and other members of the community represented by games: one game that develops memory skills (memory game), and other games (charades, pictograph, online tasks, collaborative sentence building time) that cultivate real life social interaction and students' communicative language skills such as body language, gestures, actions and use of words and expressions (International Baccalaureate Organization, 2009). Besides, being preschool teachers implies not only teaching English to our students, but also being committed to follow and fulfill our school's integrated education guidelines such as: "the incorporation of a learning organization where girls develop habits and strategies for effective learning within the group", and "achieving habits at home, school and within the community" (Gimnasio Femenino, 2009-2010).

Due to the fact that "students must feel comfortable and receptive to the input in their learning environment, learners' emotional state or attitudes act like a filter that passes or blocks input necessary to acquisition." (Brown, 2007, p. 26-28). Therefore the well known innatist model: Affective Filter Hypothesis, which shows the importance of the affective factors in the process of SLA, will also be part of the theoretical background, since well designed tasks that include learner's needs and learning styles lower the affective filter. Some factors that are variables to take into account when

teaching are: motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. “Students who are comfortable, and have a positive attitude toward language learning, have a low affective filter. They seek and receive more input, interact with confidence and are more receptive to the input they receive. On the other hand, a stressful environment, where students are forced to produce, raises the affective filter because it prevents acquisition from taking place.” (Van Patten & Willliams, 2006) Taking the previous premise into consideration, Affective Filter hypothesis is a basis for our project, due to our students’ profile and needs.

Looking through a Constructivist/Functionalist lens, our project includes the Processability theory (Pienemann, 1998), which implies that L2 acquisition, vocabulary ability in our case, starts with an unmarked functional structure in beginners, and changes with the relationship between arguments and functional structure which require additional processing procedures that will be acquired later. Processing constrains language development, determining and explaining the sequence in which processing skills develop in relation to language learning.

When processing information at any state of development, the learner can produce and comprehend only those second language linguistic forms that the current state of the language processor can handle. The language processor accounts for language processing in real time, within human psychological constraints, such as word access, and working memory.

Each level is prerequisite for processing a skill at the next level (Pienemann and Hakansson, 1999):

1. *"Lemma- word access:* words or lemmas are processed, but they do not yet carry any grammatical information, nor are they yet associated with any ordering rules."

2. *Category procedure:* Lexical items are categorized, and grammatical information may be added (e.g. number and gender to nouns, tense to verbs).

3. *Phrasal Procedure:* Operations within the phrase level occur.

(Levels 4 and 5 of Pienemann and Hakansson's (1999) acquisitional hierarchy of processing skills are not included due to the target group's profile and skills).

This deals with an implicational hierarchy because the processing skill at level 1 is a prerequisite for processing skill at level 2; level 2 is prerequisite for further levels (Phrasal procedure, S-procedure and Clause boundary). However, taking into account the target group, the sequence of strategies describes the learner's developing terms of processing needed as prerequisite to acquire appropriate use of English at successive stages. Contextualized vocabulary, phrase structure and transfer of implicit grammatical information within language, teaching in Prekindergarten, are processing prerequisites at successive stages in Kindergarten, Transition and so on. Breen (1984) suggested that "with communication at the centre of the curriculum, the goal of that curriculum (individuals who are capable of using the target language to communicate with others) and the means (tasks which develop this capability) begin to merge." Constructivist Interaction hypothesis is then taken into account as Brown, (2007) stated: "the dynamic nature of the interplay between learners and their peers, their teachers and others with whom they interact. The interpersonal context in which a learner operates has great significance". The method proposed includes interaction among peers, among students and teacher and among students and their families and/or friends at home, as

opportunities to practice and use the words in a meaningful way through the development of game alike tasks. Here collaborative learning and autonomy are promoted leading to “Vygostky’s zone of proximal development where students construct the new language through socially mediated interaction”. (Brown, 2007).

A further consideration focuses on “epistemological traditions in relation to learning: Objectivism, Pragmatism, and Interpretivism.

1. Objectivism (similar to behaviorism) states that reality is external and is objective, and knowledge is gained through experiences.
2. Pragmatism (similar to cognitivism) states that reality is interpreted, and knowledge is negotiated through experience and thinking.
3. Interpretivism (similar to constructivism) states that reality is internal, and knowledge is constructed.” (Siemmens, 2007)

Transferring these concepts into the project means:

1. Vocabulary is objective and is acquired through experiences or tasks in a repeated exposure to it. “
2. Vocabulary words are meant to be owned by the learner, who interprets, and negotiates knowledge through thinking when developing the tasks.
3. Vocabulary is internalized in order to use it in context and construct knowledge.

Observing through the lens of Connectivism (Siemens, 2004), we find ICT as an active part of the contents of the method proposed in the project in this particular case. Connectivism is founded on the understanding that new information is continually being acquired, and the ability to draw distinctions between important and unimportant information is vital.

Some Principles of Connectivism taken into account in this project are:

"Learning may reside in non-human appliances" (Siemens, 2004). Since online tasks will be designed to be used as virtual practice.

"Nurturing and maintaining connections is needed to facilitate continual learning." (Siemens, 2004). Taking into account this statement, continuous learning opportunities are given by the use of the method at school and at home on a daily basis or as wanted or required.

"Decision-making is itself a learning process. Choosing what to learn and the meaning of incoming information is seen through the lens of a shifting reality" (Siemens, 2004). The method proposes a chain of tasks that are offered to the students and their families, allowing them to make the decision whether to use the material, strategies and opportunities and of course the language learned, or not to use them. They decide what to learn and the meaning of incoming, in other words; they practice "knowledge management" (Siemens, 2004).

Learning styles are taken into account as well; tasks have been designed to cope with visual, oral and kinesthetic learners. Students are challenged to explore the relationship between words they now in L2 and words they do not know.

The Tasks continuity chain is based on the objective of helping students develop "vocabulary ability, which involves more than knowing a lot of lexical items; learners must have ready access to that knowledge and be able to draw on it effectively in performing language-use tasks." (Read, 2000). The project elicits a three stage model of vocabulary building: input, storage and retrieval (McCarthy, 1990).as follows: positive input (language is 'written' in a graphic way), by raising awareness (knowing lexical items); storage (that is held and not lost) by building memory and vocabulary ability skills (Have aceess to lexical items) ; and retrieval (it can be called up when need for use), by using the skills (being able to draw on llexical items in an effectives ways when performing language usage tasks

The differences between the Tasks-continuity chain´ and a three-stage model of vocabulary-building, is that it takes the three stages and applies them in 6 different moments to assure awareness and enough vocabulary practice and meaning understanding, acccompanied by affectiveness and habit building spaces at home with parents, to build skills in order to use them to contextualize and communicate. The 2 initial tasks in the chain are devoted to raise awareness of the new words to be learnt, their sound, pronunciation and meaning; the next 2 tasks help the students build the skills to have access to their vocabulary knowledge and the last 2 tasks challenge the students to use the vocabulary ability developed in a communicative way.

State of the Art

Looking for related research projects, we found out that there are no studies that match ours. However, there are three which findings relate to our constructs:

Phillips, B.; Clancy-Menchetti, J.; & Lonigan, C. (2008). “Successful Phonological Awareness Instruction with Preschool Children: Lessons From the Classroom.”

This study focuses on phonological awareness development which is implicitly embedded in the topic of our research, because we used the vocabulary introduced for the alphabet letters’ initial sound as input. This sample research points out the need for teachers to have appropriate training on how to support this aspect of the language (phonological awareness) through specific activities and a solid teaching plan design, focused on scaffolding strategies. One of this study’s findings support our vocabulary ability construct, and is helpful for our research, due to the fact that it states that all children can benefit from greater attention to language instruction in preschool contexts, through intervention strategies. In particular, children need opportunities to learn new vocabulary words and concepts, and to use new language in natural, functionally relevant situations. It serves the purpose of our research project which is focused on the design of a chain of tasks as an intervention strategy that provides various opportunities to learn new vocabulary and reinforce it in situations like game, that allow the use of such vocabulary in context, in natural, functional and relevant ways.

Bourke, J. (2006). Designing a topic-based syllabus for young learners. ELT Journal 2006 60(3):279-286; doi:10.1093/elt/ccl008.

This study emphasizes the design of a task-based syllabus (task-based approach) and classwork materials suitable for young learners. It highlights the need for appropriate target-setting and topic-based/task-based syllabus. It resembles our research in the sense that "a second language syllabus should reflect the world of the child and facilitate the bringing of acquisition into the classroom." (Bourke, 2006).

Comparing and contrasting the basics, findings and conclusions of this sample research with ours, we found out helpful information as follows:

Language teaching should relate to the child's world. Teachers must re-discover and inhabit the world of the students when designing tasks for a task-based syllabus, for young learners assuring that it is experientially appropriate, including: games and fun activities to do and make, pairwork and groupwork, ICT materials and meaningful drills to develop authentic and contextuatilized communication.

Teachers must create appropriate conditions and environments to develop effective teaching – learning processes (Darkin, 1973) where comprehensible input and a stress-free environment take place, having in mind that "learning linguistic items is not a linear process—learners do not master one item and then move on to another. In fact the learning curve for a single item is not linear either" (Larsen-Freeman, 1997). This idea supports the continuous cycle of the tasks continuity chain designed to offer learners a non-linear process to develop vocabulary ability.

Language input must be comprehensible and memorable. Children need exposure to 'whole instances of language use' in natural contexts for the integration of language input and skills development. (Bourke, 2006). Our research offers instances to our students to face tasks in which they are exposed to language usage.

Hudelson (1991) proposes four basic principles of learning and language learning that also serve our research:

1. "Young learners are in the 'concrete operations' stage of cognitive development. This means that they learn through hands-on experiences. It follows that in language classes children 'need to be active rather than passive; they need to be engaged in activities of which language is a part; they need to be working on meaningful tasks and use language to accomplish those tasks'.

2. In a group situation some members know more than others. Those who know less can learn from those who know more. Hence, children need to interact with and learn from each other. Teachers too need to interact with the children in order to challenge them to go beyond their present level of expression. This kind of contextual support is known as 'scaffolding' (Ellis, 1997).

3. Acquisition is a discovery process. Learners have to figure out how the language works. 'In terms of the classroom context, an implication is that learners need opportunities to use and to experiment with the new language.' (Hudelson, 1991).

Learners must be free to make errors so they can re-structure their emerging language system.

4. Acquisition (in our case ‘vocabulary ability’) occurs through social interaction. Meaning is constructed jointly as learners work together and exchange messages. They need to talk to each other in order to negotiate meaning.”

These four principles are the basis of our research project, since it provides meaningful tasks and the language use to accomplish those tasks; it offers opportunities for scaffolding along the different tasks; it make the learners to figure out how language works, they are free to make errors and invited to re-structure their vocabulary ability under development; and the project promotes interaction through which meaning is constructed.

Children acquire language when they understand messages, by receiving comprehensible input. (Krashen, 1981). Through our research we attempted to have children acquire language when they understood messages from the tasks, by receiving comprehensible input. As a conclusion of this sample study, language learning is easy when the child is actively involved in the learning process; it is the learner who does the learning and the teacher's role is to facilitate the learning process in a structured way. Our role as teachers – researchers in our project, is to facilitate learning through the implementation of a ‘structured’ tasks continuity chain.

Newton, J. Options for vocabulary learning through communication tasks. ELT Journal. Volume 55, Number 1. pp. 30-37.

This research focuses on learning 'in-passing' new vocabulary through task-based encounters, by negotiating meaning cooperatively. However, it relates to our constructs vocabulary ability and task based approach, because it provides students with the opportunity to construct a Vocabulary Log to encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. This supports our idea of having a Vocabulary Box to keep vocabulary cards made by the students in the first task of the chain (memory game), in order to use the information in them for the following tasks. Our tasks continuity chain includes making pictographs of the collaborative sentence building time that also serve as a Vocabulary Log.

This sample research, although focused on older learners and on tasks directed to find out new words meanings, contains similar tasks to the ones we used such as making flashcards, using the words in sentences to create imaginary stories and telling them. Newton's statements that "through tasks learners meet language in ways that encourage the construction of multiple associations, between old and new knowledge in their lexical systems" and "teachers have different options to enhance attention to vocabulary", from which students may choose according to their interests and learning styles, directly relate to our research design.

Chapter 3

Research design

Type of Study

The type of study we followed was action research. According to Ferrance (2000), “typically, action research is undertaken in a school setting. It is a reflective process that allows for inquiry and discussion as components of the ‘research.’ Often, action research is a collaborative activity among colleagues searching for solutions to everyday, real problems experienced in schools, or looking for ways to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Rather than dealing with the theoretical, action research allows practitioners to address those concerns that are closest to them, ones over which they can exhibit some influence and make change.” (Ferrance, E. (2000), p.6). This definition best fits the purpose of the present work as it is student-centered, and supports teachers’ active role in improving teaching and promoting learning.

“Action research will not provide all the answers to our questions about how students learn or what educators can do to improve practice. But action research happens at the place where these questions arise: it happens where the real action is taking place; and it allows for immediate action.” (Ferrance, 2000, p.36). Since the aim of this research project is practical and intends to solve an everyday lack - students’ needs to communicate meaningfully, with a broader range of vocabulary each time, Ferrance’s statements are in accordance with our research aims.

Researchers' role

Facilitating the research implementation implies researchers to take different roles:

The practical activity and intellectual engagement needed in an action research requires assuming the roles of observers and interpreters of phenomena, behaviours and patterns to get acquainted with students' perceptions and attitudes towards the method proposed, gatherers and assemblers of general data and about parental involvement degree of students' learning process and autonomy development; active participants of the design, implementation, analysis and evaluation of qualitative and quantitative data; collaborators providing information, insights, and reflections along the process, and decision makers in order to keep the different research variables under control.

The Tasks continuity chain's interactive feature also demands assuming the role of interaction facilitators, monitors, models, communicators, and evaluators of the method's design effectiveness in the whole process. (Bridget, 2005).

Participants' roles

Active listeners, tasks developers, learning builders, autonomy apprentices.

Parents' roles

Committed supporters, motivators, guiders, autonomy models, technology use models, facilitators, evaluators. (See Appendix S – Parents' involvement and commitment guidelines).

Context

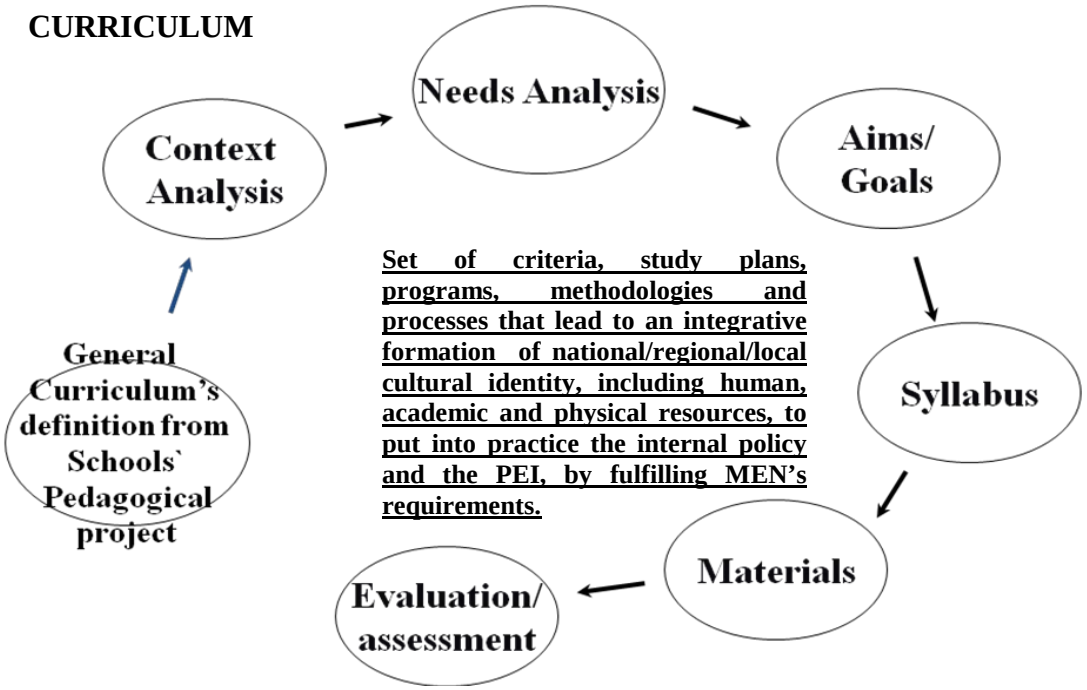
This action research project was carried out at Gimnasio Femenino, private school in Bogotá, with three groups of prekindergarteners (PK Level), including 44 students, four to five years old and their parents. Students had just entered the school when the study began, and they received eight hours (40 minutes each) of English classes weekly.

Students' English oral comprehension is in an emerging stage, they begin to imitate the verbalization models of teachers by using single words or simple phrases, and they begin to use these spontaneously. At this early stage, learners construct meaning from vocabulary primarily through illustrations. Students were accompanied by bilingual parents able to share knowledge and non bilingual parents willing to learn.

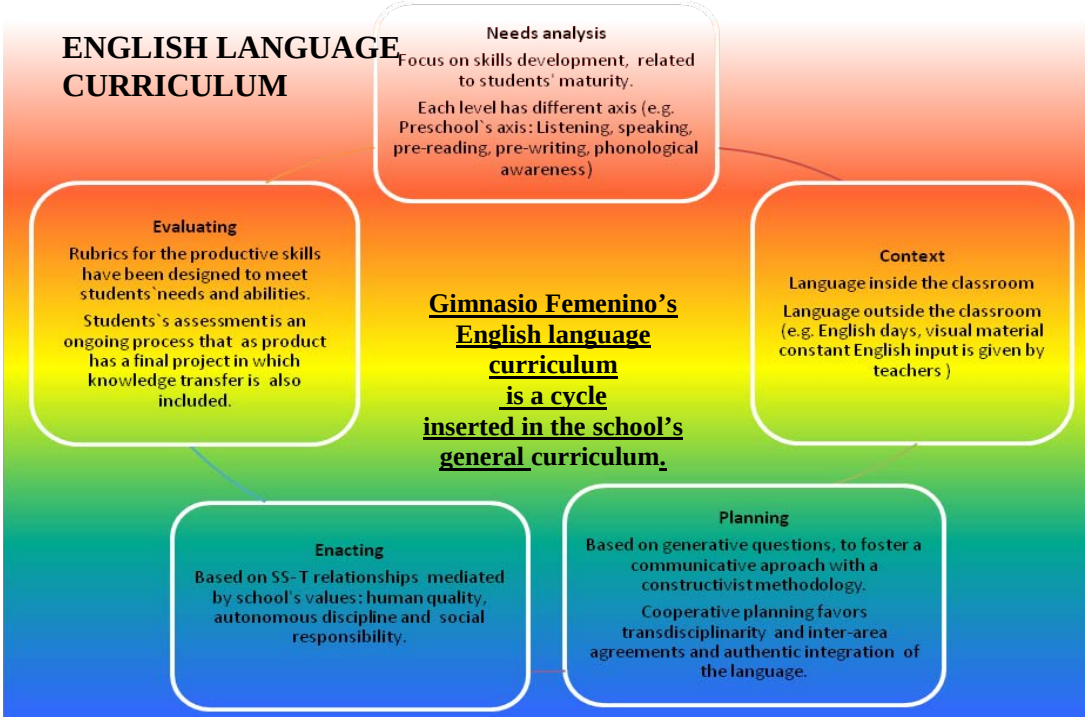
Curriculum

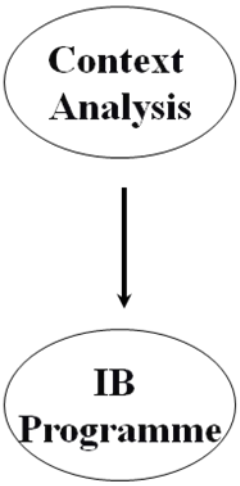
School's English language curriculum is a cycle inserted in the school's general curriculum as shown in the following diagrams. Context and needs analysis are the starting point of the school's pedagogical project for the general curriculum, and for the English Language curriculum, and the basis of our research study.

SCHOOL'S GENERAL CURRICULUM



ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM





Areas to be taught in English – Hours of instruction

Section / Subject	English	Science	Art	Social Studies
Preschool:	8	2	2	--
Primary	8	4-5	2	
High school	6	Biology 3-4 hours	2	5
10th and 11th grades	6	Students make a decision: to study an an emphasis (in Spanish)		

The curriculum includes other areas in English that complement and support the English language learning, as shown in the last diagram above.

Participants

The target group was composed by girls whose age ranges from 4-5 years old, Level 1-Starting, (TESOL Standards, March 2006), whose age ranges between 4 to 5 years old. They attempt to use English to express basic needs and identify people, animals, places and objects surrounding them. They are in their “Preoperational stage” (Piaget, 1972), in which language development is one of the hallmarks wherein through playing children become increasingly adept at using symbols. Furthermore, “operations being internalized by sets of actions will allow them to do mentally what before did physically.” (Cognitive development of early childhood, n.d.).

Linguistic needs:

- Curiosity to learn new vocabulary and lexical chunks in the new language – English- .
- Opportunities to use the language learned beyond school.
- Integrated receptive and productive skills development.

  Reading images.

  Listening to others, to a story, inferring meaning.

  Speaking: confidence, organization, interaction.

  Writing: communication through illustrations.
- Pronunciation: phonics – phonological awareness, vocabulary build up, stress, rhythm, intonation.
- To be trained in Computer based learning (CBL) e.g. mouse training skills, key board usage.
- Contextualization of vocabulary and activities.
- To develop skills to cope with task based lessons, taking into account this is a mixed ability group

Affective needs

- Personal attention due to the fact that at this age children are egocentric (Rosansky, 1975), they are in their “Preoperational stage” (Piaget, 1972) needing peer and adult companion. Language development is one of the hallmarks of this stage in which through playing and pretending, children become increasingly adept at using symbols. (Van Wagner et al., 2008). They

get motivated and willing to learn towards ludic classes with interesting interactive content.

- To learn through ludic classes that respond to their learning styles.
- Motivation – (bring out intrinsic, and give them extrinsic) by the use of concrete experiences to be reached through meaningful activities.
- To be fostered to develop concentration and self confidence through learner training: by giving them opportunities to build up coordination, cooperation, daily routines, autonomy, reflection, and focus, as well as to experience values such as: collaboration, Sharing, responsibility, caring.
- To develop fine-gross motor skills, basic pencil control skills and proper posture.

Besides having learners as participants, parents were invited to be involved. The learners' roles were active listeners and performers, and their parents' role was process supporters.

Data collection instruments and procedures

PHASE	INSTRUMENTS	PROCEDURES
Pre	Surveys for parents	They included "clear predetermined questions seeking for specific information needed" (Burns, 1999) and how participants think about their learning styles when starting school. (Jimenez, Luna, Marin, 1996), to discover patterns of our students' learning styles, that were compared with the tasks designed to find out if there was a need to include some other tasks, or re-design those which we already had. We were also able to identify to what extent parents were predisposed to supporting their daughters' learning processes.
	Vocabulary	Instrument designed by teachers in order to

	knowledge Teacher-made pretest (Diagnostic activity)	know about the ELL background of each student (excellent/ outstanding/ acceptable, insufficient performance). Applied in a class by teachers. It was supported by a Tally sheet (Mills, 2007), to determine students' vocabulary prior knowledge at the beginning of the project. This was the starting point of the study.
While	Vocabulary ability assessment tests	Tally sheets (Jimenez, Luna, Marín, 1993) to follow-up students' vocabulary ability real performance and tasks usage when faced to reminding, understanding and using the vocabulary in context. (keeping record on students' progress and use of the task chain).
	Autonomous daily achievement chart	Autonomous daily achievement tally sheet. (Bell, 1993), to gather information about students' involvement in their own learning process and the level of autonomous behaviors students had during the implementation of the tasks continuity chain at home. This instrument was an adaptation of Bell's designed to facilitate it usage by preschool students, instead of marking tallies in the grid, they colored the spaces.
	Collaborative sentence-building task	Tally sheets were used in classroom observations to check and collect information on students' contributions and vocabulary ability. (Bell, 1993).
	Notes	Notes of students' approaches and behaviors while implementing the tasks in class. (Burns, 1999). Used to record evidence in written form about methodology, reactions in students and parents, including possible changes/constraints, phenomena, patterns, and behaviors.
	Project implementation questionnaire (Burns, 1999)	To identify the frequency of material and tasks usage at home while implementation stage.
Post	Post intervention test	Tally sheet (Mills, 2007). This instrument was used to verify students' progresses on vocabulary ability after the implementation to be compared with the teacher-made pretest and the while implementation

		Vocabulary ability assessment tests.
	Post - implementation questionnaires	To identify the frequency of material and tasks usage at home after the implementation stage.
	Artifacts (Mills, 2007),	Informal examples of students' graphic output of L and D online tasks implementation, to determine the students' autonomy scope to use and fulfill the task entirely.

Chapter 4

Pedagogical intervention and implementation

Action Plan

In this section, the steps and processes followed to solve the problem will be described, including a timeline (See *Appendix A*).

The pedagogical intervention design included Task-based activities which involve communicative language use where the learner is focused on meaning in the process of solving the tasks. The proposal included sequenced chained activities in which "the successful completion of prior activities is a prerequisite for succeeding ones." This sequence known as Task continuity (Nunan, 1989, p.119) offered alternatives for meeting students' needs since it was varied, enjoyable and motivating. The tasks' design followed a bottom-up approach to language comprehension as they set various components to be joined together to comprehend and produce knowledge at students' stage of development.

Each task was designed to create a continuous higher level of memory use to develop long term memory of the vocabulary, in order to develop memory skills to prepare students' to contextualize language meaningfully when needed to develop the tasks, and to face the communicative opportunities given by the last task of the chain to perform successfully and self-confidently. For this purpose we included Shancks' long term memory definition: "Long term memory depends on the meaningfulness of the experience and the interrelationships with other experiences and items previously acquired; people only remember what is relevant to them" (Shanck, 1992, p. 79). Tasks

were meant to promote such kind of experience since they were to be performed at home with parents, and for little children experiences with parents are undoubtedly significant.

Task types

Tasks designed mixed real-world games used in social events and pedagogical tasks. The former was based on needs analysis, and the latter relied on theories (Nunan, 1989, p.119). This project's pedagogic tasks were based on Processability Theory, Skills Acquisition Theory and Behavioral Theory (Chapter 2).

-Games: Memory game, Charades, Pictograph. These tasks were used to assist vocabulary building to move to the following task.

-Building sentences: This task challenged students to use the vocabulary learned through the previous games.

-ICT's – Learning objects: In these tasks students drilled, practiced or be challenged to use their built up vocabulary knowledge or speaking skills development.
This task continuity chain related to Tanner and Green's, (1998, p.11) list of effective presentation techniques for presenting new vocabulary, such as the list stated in this document's rationale.

Game Tasks

-Memory Game, Charades and Pictograph:

These kinds of tasks helped exploit vocabulary learning progression from a receptive and initial understanding of what a work means, by recalling and recycling

previously known words, to keep them active and to being able to use them accurately. (Cameron, 2001, p. 95). These tasks did not operate only on oral repetition but on having to recall the image of the word, and its meaning, by challenging ways to draw the learner's attention to it. (Craik & Lockhart, 1972; Craik & Tulving, 1975).

Methodology for Tasks/games

The tasks included the use of material such as Vocabulary cards as the physical objects students manipulated. These objects were intended to serve the whole chain of tasks as tools to help remind the words. The tasks were events that elicited students to use the material and of course to use the vocabulary. Shank (1992, p. 20) states "Physical objects can remind you of other physical objects", "Events can remind you of physical objects". The vocabulary cards were physical objects meant to remind students of the real objects represented in them as well as their naming words; the tasks were events designed to help students remind of the physical objects and their naming words as well.

A vocabulary cards format was designed, to be used in different ways for implementing the Task-continuity-chain of activities: Memory Game, Charades, Pictograph, Online tasks and Building sentences - communicative opportunity - task as follows:

- Memory game: The students cut a set of 8 pairs of matching pictures, with new vocabulary related to each new beginning sound introduced. The game consisted of placing all the word-cards up-side down (after mixing them), then, choosing two of them at a time to discover the pairs, while recalling

each card`s corresponding word. If the player did not match the pictures or said the wrong words, he/she had to correct the words and place the word cards up-side down again. The player had to say the name of each picture in order to win (rabbit-rabbit, for example).

- Charades: This game was played with the same cards of the Memory Game. In pairs, each student had a set of five cards (both students had the same pictures). One student picked one card from her partner and mimicked the corresponding picture for the other player to guess it. If the answer was right, the student who guessed had to keep the card faced up. If not, the card was returned to her owner. The game finished when all the vocabulary cards were recalled.
- Pictographic: This game was played with the same cards used for the Memory Game. In pairs, each student had a set of five cards (both students had the same pictures). One student picked one card from her partner and had to draw (on the board or on a piece of paper) the corresponding picture for the other player to guess it. If the answer was right, the student who guessed would keep the card faced up. If not, the card was returned to her owner. The game finished when all the vocabulary was recalled.

These tasks attempted to overcome the causes of difficulty when acquiring vocabulary because they assured repetition and attention (Norton, 2000) in challenging ways to draw the learners' attention to the words; and promote relationships among words when contextualizing language as a communicative opportunity for the students' level.

- The words chosen, mostly nouns, where selected with the following criteria:

  "Rodgers (1969) found that the part of speech of a word affects its learning. Nouns are the easiest to learn and adjectives are next, verbs and adverbs are the most difficult to learn." (Nation, 2000, p. 48)

  The material currently worked at school contains vocabulary flashcards as key words from the songs and readers, basis of the program most words were taken from that context.

  Some words were added in order to reinforce other topics from the program or to enrich the vocabulary for the topic to be worked.

Some other reasons as Nation stated are: "the word is very frequent and very important for the learners; the word causes particular difficulty, the word is needed for another activity, such as a game" like memory game, charades…, or to build sentences; "the word contains features of regular patterns" such as the same beginning sound.

(See *Appendix C Sample Material – Vocabulary cards*)

Online Tasks

ICT's were used as tools to design Learning Objects that served as tasks to support the previous ones, and as means to get students motivated and involved with technology at this early age, emphasizing on becoming mouse-trained. (Brown, S. Earlam, C., Race, P., 1998). (e.g. *Appendix D*).

This kind of tasks were very productive in terms of developing oral skills and basic technological awareness as a basis for developing self-confidence, autonomy, meaning and comprehension. Cooperative learning through parental guidance at home and pair

work at school “can help foster social skills needed to interact and communicate equitable” (Crandall, 1987).

Concerning the use of ICT’s in this research project, we agree with the idea of getting our students gain confidence and competence with computers as they are key for their future lives and professions (Brown, S, Earlam, C, Race, P., 1998, p.117, 118), as well as for their forthcoming academic performance at school. Computer-based learning materials can be very useful for various students to practice, find out and learn from each other. Through online audiovisual materials to be included in Learning Objects under design by the teachers-researchers, learners will be able to see experiences they cannot face directly, and convey messages through body language, gestures, tone of voice, social behaviors, and skills and techniques. (Brown, S, et al., 1998. p. 135).

Building sentences Task – Communicative opportunity –

Once vocabulary had been introduced, recalled and learned through the other four tasks of the chain, giving students sufficient practice and confidence to use it, they were challenged to link the words and meanings in an imaginary context created by them as a communicative opportunity to contextualize language, sharing ideas that served to create a short story by joining the sentences that emerged along this task.

Based on Kooslyn’s statements (1983), “young children rely strongly on imagery, something that should certainly be taken into account in early education.” As researchers, we stimulated our students’ visualization abilities to foster communicative language production through the sentence building time.

According to Neville’s suggestion, (1989), “simple exercises must be used to retrain the imagining, which like language significantly affects the child’s ability to learn, to

develop peer and adult relationships, to pursue goals and to experience pleasure." That is why we included in the project the use of story-telling as an exercise to develop imagery, creativity, visual memory, productive skills, participation, collaborative learning and interpersonal skills.

Using a "Sentence building" (Wills, 2001) strategy for students to practice and internalize new vocabulary, as well as to gain confidence in 'building' L2, (as a communicative opportunity to develop vocabulary ability) is stated by Ellis and Brewster (1991, p.1-2): The sentences built by students served as short stories "Stories can enrich the pupils" learning experience. Stories are motivating and fun and can help develop positive attitude towards L2. Stories exercise the imagination and are a useful tool in linking fantasy and the imagination with the child's real world." Moreover, "listening to stories in class is a shared social experience. Children enjoy listening to stories over and over again." This repetition allows language items to be acquired and reinforced. Listening to sentences built in a collaborative way develops the child's listening and concentrating skills. Sentence building creates opportunities for developing continuity in children's communicative language learning.

The design included learners' previous experience with language; first and second languages are stored together, this encouraged borrowing and interference between both languages. However, Norton (1990) states that a "second language learner clearly brings the benefits of knowing vocabulary and cognitive development in the first language" students will bring the benefits of L1 when asked to build a sentence using a set of words. Code switching and language mixing were also taken into account as part of the process as normal aspect of the second language acquisition. Espinoza (in press)

explains that “the main reason that children mix the two languages in one communication is the lack of vocabulary on one or both languages to fully express themselves”, in this case the second one. The task chain also takes into account features of vocabulary teaching-learning such as: spoken form, collocation, frequency, appropriateness, meaning, and associations. (Nation, 2000).

The procedure was carried out by Premontessori students and English teachers through manipulation of especially designed materials and tasks as follows:

Starting date: September 1st, 2009.

Final Date: October 23rd, 2009

Aims

-To develop vocabulary acquisition with focus on beginning sound awareness favouring the identification, recognition and usage of such vocabulary in context.

- To recall the vocabulary learned when visualized.

- To use the vocabulary learned in context.

- To use self access learning products to develop autonomous learning.

Autonomous skills were promoted accordingly to Benson’s (2001) practices associated to development of autonomy:

“Resource based approach”: inviting students and parents to develop tasks at home, interacting with learning materials.

”Technology based approach”: interacting with educational online tasks as learning objects.

“Learner based approach”: with an emphasis on students production of behavioral changes.

“Teacher based approach”: based on the role of the teachers and the teacher’s education in the practice of fostering autonomy among learners.

At this early age students depend in a certain way on parents’ model of autonomy. Therefore, such promotion included parental involvement guided by the researchers through written communication (See Appendix S). Another way to promote autonomy was the collaborative sentence building time in which the students are intrinsically motivated to use their vocabulary ability developed by autonomous practice at home, in a communicative way for peers and teachers to interact among them. Students that have developed such autonomy at home were be chosen as models in class as an intrinsic motivational strategy. Besides, an autonomy chart was designed for them to self-monitor their autonomy progress along with parents at home. (See Appendix R)

According to Dornyei (2001, p. 103) “autonomy is related to group dynamics” because each member of the group must have “responsibility and control over their own functioning. From the point of view of group dynamics, involved students are increasingly autonomous students”. In order to motivate shy and uninterested students to work autonomously at home, we used peer support in class (parents' support at home) (Arnold, 1999, p.235), - group/team task development- for performance feedback and assistance. Through the use of this strategy, peers encouraged and supported participation and contribution. Cooperative tasks chain development in teams that compete against each other in order to win points, ensured the participation of all

members of the group at their own level, having always a positive feedback when participating, This goal and reward strategy, through enjoyable task development "contest"competition like activity" in class encouraged participation using both, cooperation and competition as motivation for participation, having affective and cognitive benefits for Language (vocabulary in this case) acquisition. (Crandall 1987). Assuring motivation and participation in class, was meant to give confidence to students of their knowledge of the new words learnt in class, to used them as home when autonomously developing the tasks with their parents, having the freedom to choose, which is the relevance of autonomy to motivation. (Dornyei, 2001)

Autonomy development in the project included the notion of interdependence, “That is being responsible for one’s own conduct in the social context: being able to cooperate with others and solve conflict in a constructive ways.” (Kohonen, 1982). Students were invited to build up interdependence as part of their autonomy developmental process.

Procedure

Once the institution and parents had approved the development of the research *(See Appendix 5 – Consent letters),* we as teachers-researchers started to apply the task-chained activities in our classes as follows:

Once a week in class:

1. Teacher introduced the new sound and related vocabulary, by means of songs, especially designed learning objects, flashcards and realia.
2. Students colored the illustrations on designed vocabulary cards (two of the same for each student) while drilling the vocabulary.

3. Students cut the illustration to make a set of vocabulary cards with which to play memory game, charades and pictograph.

4. Teachers modeled how to play (memory game, charades and pictograph) in whole group activities.

5. Students were guided to play in pairs or groups using a set of vocabulary cards. Groups were monitored one by one in order to check for correct pronunciation and proper game procedure to assure understanding, for them to transfer the tasks procedures at home.

6. Students took the vocabulary cards home in order to have self access for autonomous practice.

As wished at home:

7. Students were invited to practice the tasks and to self access ICTs designed tools available at the school's web page, in autonomous way.

8. Students made a follow-up of their autonomous performance by filling out a "Daily achievement format" sent home.

A week after the new words were introduced in class:

9. A week after each word's introduction, students were given a communicative opportunity, they were invited to use the vocabulary in context in a collaborative sentence building time.

10. . Students developed a pictographic task with the sentences built by the students in a collaborative way..

(For detailed information see Appendix B - Lesson Plan)

At home:

11. Students were invited to retell the short story made with the sentences built at school to their parents; they could also invent new ones.

The materials used were:

- Vocabulary cards: Worksheets designed with the vocabulary images to be colored and cut. (See Appendix C)
- Vocabulary box: A storage device to keep vocabulary cards organized.
- Autonomy daily achievement format. A format designed to keep record of students' independent work and autonomous behaviors and daily progression. (See Appendix R).
- Online tasks, Flash files that contained the vocabulary to be learned in the form of games for students' further practice at home, available in the school's web page.
- Computers to be used at home in order to self-access the online tasks.
- Data collection instruments (see Chapter 3).

Chapter 5

Data Analysis and Findings

Introduction

This data analysis is the result of a deep process of interpretation of data collected on our teaching before, during and after carrying out the action research project we conducted during the first semester of the academic year 2009 – 2010, with Spanish speaking Prekindergarten students at Gimnasio Femenino. This study attempted to introduce a method called "“Task Continuity Chain” whose basis is Task Based Learning – Task-continuity – “chaining of activities” (Nunan, 1989, p.119). The use of such chain of activities was intended to foster English language vocabulary acquisition understood as ‘vocabulary ability which involves more than knowing a lot of lexical items; learners must have ready access to that knowledge and be able to draw on it effectively in performing language-use tasks’ (Read, 2000).

The main objective of this study was meant to enhance language use in context, at school and at home. The task-continuity chain included the following tasks: memory game, charades, online tasks, collaborative sentence building time and pictograph. Through the systematic application of these tasks, supported by parents by means of practicing them at home on a daily basis, the effects were improvement in listening skills, pronunciation as a speaking sub-skill, ‘reading’ (recognizing and reminding vocabulary from images), as well as vocabulary usage in context.

As a result to meet the secondary objectives of the project, online tasks were designed and offered to students -through the school’s web page- for them to reinforce

the vocabulary learned at school, making use of technology to enhance vocabulary ability skills, as well as to promote their autonomy, along with the memory game, charades and pictograph.

Taking into account our researchers' role as observers, moderators, active participants, interlocutors with parents, and collaborators enhancing a learning process – "vocabulary ability– by interpreting data from real teaching practice, through objective and empathic understanding of the project contextualization, the process of identifying the complex variables and interwoven data was carried out as follows:

Sources of data, validity and relevance

The validity of the following sources of data was analyzed under Maxwell's criteria (1992): Descriptive, Interpretive and Theoretical validity.

-Two preliminary surveys for parents and students:

Designed in surveymonkey.com, including "clear predetermined questions seeking for specific information needed" (Burns, 1999) and how participants think about their learning styles when starting school. (Jimenez, Luna, Marin, 1996). These data imply interpretive validity because information came from parents' and students' participation prior to the implementation. The relevance of these instruments relies on the fact that the data collected gave us patterns of our students' learning styles that were compared with the tasks designed to find out if there was a need to include some other tasks, or re-design the ones we already had.

- Vocabulary knowledge Teacher-made pretest (Mills, 2007):

These data entail descriptive validity due to the evidence of facts shown the way they really are (Maxwell, 1992). The relevance of data gathered is directly related to the students' vocabulary prior knowledge at the beginning of the project. This is indeed the starting point of the study *(See Appendix G).*

- Tally sheets (Jimenez, Luna, Marín, 1993) for vocabulary ability assessment and tasks follow-up (To keep a record on students' progress and use of the task chain):

These data entail descriptive validity "due to the evidence of facts shown the way they really are" (Maxwell, 1992). The task chain involves theoretical validity related to behavioral theory which sees language learning as a process of imitation and repetition in which input and output are continuous, giving the students a set of new habits to be acquired by repeated imitation of correct models of pronunciation (phonics) and related vocabulary words. (Brown, 2007, pp. 17-25). The relevance of the data collected through these instruments relies on the students' real performance in vocabulary ability and tasks usage when faced to reminding and understanding the vocabulary in context.

-Classroom observation of students' contributions in the collaborative sentence building task. (Tally sheet) (Bell, 1993):

Such were relevant to assess students' vocabulary ability and use in context.

The evidence of students actually participating in this task, in an accurate way, shows the fact they have acquired the vocabulary and attempt to use it, information that imply descriptive validity (Maxwell, 1992).

-Tally sheet of post intervention test. (Mills, 2007):

This instrument was used to verify students' progresses on vocabulary ability after the implementation to be compared with the teacher-made pretest. These data imply descriptive validity "due to the evidence of facts shown the way they really are," in this case the vocabulary acquired by students. (Maxwell, 1992).

-Project implementation questionnaires (Burns, 1999), through written questions regarding frequency of material and tasks usage at home:

These data imply interpretive validity because they come from parents' and students' participation in giving feedback about the process and results. Its relevance lies on the factual information during the implementation of the method at home, informed by parents *(See Appendix I).*

-Tally sheet of Autonomous daily achievement. (Bell, 1993):

This instrument was an adaptation of Bell's designed to facilitate it usage by preschool students, instead of marking tallies in the grid, they colored the spaces. These data imply interpretive validity because come from students' perspectives and behaviors about autonomous work. The relevance of this instrument is directly related to our second objective which is to develop autonomous behaviors. It gives us information about the degree of autonomous behaviors students have had during the implementation of the task chain at home.

-Artifacts (Mills, 2007):

Informal examples of students' graphic output of L and D online tasks implementation, which are relevant to determine the students' autonomy scope to use and fulfill the task entirely as well as to show vocabulary ability when naming the vocabulary used in the artifact for the teacher.

-Notes of students' approaches and behaviors: while implementing the tasks in class classify as descriptive validity in the way that such information was taken right after students participated in class, and commented on their practice at home (Burns, 1999).

-Post - implementation questionnaires (Burns, 1999): through written questions regarding frequency of material and tasks usage at home after the implementation stage. These data imply interpretive validity because they come from parents' and students' participation in giving feedback about the process and results. Its relevance lies on the factual information about final results, and evaluation of the project.

-Online tasks web page's comments: Informal data collection instrument.

Data Analysis Method and Procedures

Qualitative Analysis

We chose Auebarch & Silverstein's, coding procedure to analyze a corpus of data, acquired by us as direct participants-observers, that helped us both inductively and deductively generate a "grounded theory".(Auerback and Silverstein, 2003, p. 44).

We attempted to draw conclusions, qualify, and support the quality of our theory by analyzing the data collected applying Auerbach and Silverstein's procedures of coding and categorizing: Coding repeating ideas, categorizing themes and building theoretical constructs, carried out as follows in the Data Analyisis Outline.

Table 1

Data Analyisis Outline

When	What	Why	How	Researchers' role
March 6th through 8th	Open coding Research concerns To Look at field notes taken to identify indicators of categories in events and behavior name them, categorize them and describe phenomena found.	Contextualization and Interpretation To analyze data collected as descriptive, sentences and, paragraphs in search of the answer to our forts analysis question "what was the research about? Which phenomena were found? What is all the data that has been collected? How can it be categorized?	By reading and revising field notes and other data collected in order to conceptualize it (in nouns, verbs, adjectives and) and to identify and code them with numbers and colors.	Individual work for further comparison, and identification of common conceptualization and coding.
March 9th and 10th	Relevant text Repeating ideas	To compare codes to text to find consistencies and differences. The	Relating the text to concerns (the field notes, interviews, etc.)	Individual work to be shared and merged on March 10th,

		consistencies between codes (similar meanings or pointing to a basic idea)	Looking/choosing information that directly relates to the research. Comparing Codes: consistencies and differences (for categorization)	
March 11th through 12th	Themes and theoretical constructs	To reveal the first categories	By relating categories to theoretical background to support those categories with constructs	Individual work to be complemented, including new theoretical findings.
March 12th & 13th	Theoretical narrative	To write the data analysis report	By following the procedure for academic writing	Collaborative work.
March 14th	Proofread Data analysis report	To guarantee the quality of academic writing	Peer proofreading	Individual work.

Data Analysis - Open coding:

Based on the data collected by the application of the different instruments, we looked for common and repetitive ideas, events and behaviors to identify and code them, as for the relevant text that directly relates to the research, to categorize them afterwards.

During the coding process, the following chart served us to organize repeating ideas, and categorize themes, and consequently determine our theoretical constructs.

Table 2

Coding process

Sources of data	Repeating ideas	Themes	Theoretical constructs
1.Preliminary Surveys for parents and students (surveymonkey)	Some patterns of parents' involvement in our study show that only 36% of the families have become acquainted with the surveys set since the beginning of the research (15 families out of the 44 total number of families). 87.5% (14 families) come from no bilingual prekindergarteners; 66.7% (10 families) of the fathers speak English; 62.5% (10 families) of the mothers do not speak English; 87.5% (14 families) play games together every day. 86.7% (13 families) say that students are motivated to learn English; 93.3% (14 families) say that students feel happy in the English class. 46.7% (7 families) say that students like to listen to stories in English. 86.7% (13 families) say that students like to	Background English knowledge and habits for potential parental participation (degree of involvement). Students' predisposition towards L2 learning	Parental support effects on students' vocabulary ability Tasks continuity chain design relation with students

	learn new words in English. 100% (15 families) say that learners have good memory for names and general information. 86.7% (13 families) say that students read illustrations and images easily. 73.3% (11 families) say that students make clear drawings. 73.3% (11 families) say that students use a lot of hand gestures and body movement when talking. 100.0% (15 families) say that students learn new games easily and quickly. 80% (12 families) say that students accurately express her ideas and feelings. 80% (12 families) of the students talk to their parents about their progresses, goals and achievements. 80% (12 families) of the students are encouraged to use what they have learned at school in other contexts.	Students' different learning styles and types of intelligences and connection with the tasks and materials' design	learning styles and affectivity.
2.Vocabulary knowledge Teacher-made pretest	59.1% of the students (26 out of 44 students) do not know a word from the vocabulary that will be studied (0 of 56 words). 18.1% of the students (8 out of 44 students) know 1.7% of the words from the vocabulary that will be studied (1 of 56).	Prior knowledge (degree of L2 previous vocabulary knowledge in English to be taught)	Input, storage, and retrieval (McCarthy, 1990, p.34) *(See Table 3*

	6.8% of the students (3 out of 44 students) know 3.5% of the words from the vocabulary that will be studied (2 of 56 words). 9.1% of the students (4 out of 44 students) know 5.3 % of the words from the vocabulary that will be studied (3 of 56 words). 2.2% of the students (1 out of 44 students) know 7.1% of the words from the vocabulary that will be studied (4 of 56 words). 2.2% of the students (1 out of 44 students) know 8.9% of the words from the vocabulary that will be studied (5 of 56 words). 2.2% of the students (1 out of 44 students) know 12.5% of the words from the vocabulary that will be studied (7 of 56 words). (See Appendix G)		Pre, while and post implementation) Tasks continuity chain's frequency practice at home.
3. Tally sheets (Jimenez, Luna, Marín, 1993) for vocabulary ability assessment and tasks follow-up	Task usage (degree of practice). →Memory Game practice →Charades practice →Pictograph practice →Online tasks practice *Vocabulary ability output →Reading/remembering image word (degree of vocabulary recognition by reading images).	Tasks continuity chain implementation progression related to frequency and vocabulary ability	

	(See Appendix H)		
4. Tally sheet of students' contributions in the collaborative sentence building task.	(See Appendix I)	Accurate use of vocabulary acquired "that will progressively allow students play with the words and build sentences (Willis, 2001, p.129), enhancing vocabulary ability and contextualization.	
5. Tally sheet of post intervention test.	(See Appendix J)	Post intervention vocabulary ability (degree of L2 vocabulary learned in English).	
6. Project implementation questionnaires	(See Appendixes K, L and M)	Project's positive/negative features related to family involvement and implementation at home. Project's design and material's advantages and disadvantages. Vocabulary ability and values added. Incidental learning.	Project's implementation at home benefits and drawbacks & parental support effects on students' vocabulary ability.

10. Post - implementation questionnaires	(See Appendix O)	Computer Based Learning (CBL) (Brown, Earlam, & Race, 1998). Students' perceptions and responses to the method.	
7. Tally chart of Autonomous daily achievement	*15 students out of 44 (34%) handed the Daily Achievements format in as a proof of their autonomous work at home (degree of autonomous performance). (See appendix N)	Reflection on autonomous work	Students' autonomous response to the method
8. Artifacts	*Online tasks' physical output (degree of autonomy in development extra activities proposed in the tasks).	Results of autonomous work by the use of online tasks	Autonomy development
9. Note taking	(See Appendix P)	Approaches and behaviors while implementing the tasks in class	Project's requirements, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
10. Web page's parents' voluntary feedback/comments.	(See Appendix Q)	Online tasks' parents' voluntary feedback	Project's implementation at home benefits and drawbacks

Quantitave Analysis

Along with a qualitative analysis of our action research, we decided to carry out a quantitative analysis of the gathered information, seeking for objective, precise measurement and analysis of target question. Having as aim to classify performances, count them, and construct statistical models in an attempt to explain what was observed, we used data in the form of numbers to make descriptive statistics including average of patterns, from frequency counts of word proper recall and usage, measures of variables such as autonomous work outputs (See Appendix N), collaborative sentence building participation (See Appendix I), family involvement (See Appendix L), tasks continuity chain frequency usage at home (See Appendix M), to find out average variations in students' performance patterns range.

We did inferential statistics by means of drawing conclusions from non-parametrical statistics related to the school's grading system: High-flyers range between 76%-100% based on the school's grading system; Average range between 60%-75%; less successful range between 0%-59%.

We applied tests of difference for repeated measures, to look for differences between the different sets of scores resulting of the assessment of the five beginning sounds and corresponding vocabulary F, S, M, L and D. (See Appendix H, and Graphs 2 and 4).

We applied students' t-test to compare vocabulary ability before (Teacher Made Pretest – See Graph 1, Appendix G), and after the intervention (Posttest – See Graph 3, Appendix J). The comparison can be seen on Graph 4.

"Although some social science researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 1989) perceive qualitative and quantitative approaches as incompatible, others (Patton, 1990; Reichardt & Cook, 1979) believe that the skilled researcher can successfully combine both approaches." (Glesne, & Peshkin, 1992). Our argument to use both relies on the bonus of both numbers from the quantitive analysis, and words from the qualitative analysis. Both methods are complementary. Their approaches allow us to know and understand different aspects components and features of our research.

Results/Findings/Theoretical constructs

Based on the data analysis, in search of answering to our research question, and having in mind our main and secondary research objectives already stated in chapter 1, the following theoretical constructs or categories emerged:

Research question	Objectives	Theoretical Constructs (Categories)

What is the effect of the implementation of Task-based approach (task continuity through chained activities) on developing *vocabulary ability* at early childhood (3 to 5 years old)?	Main: The implementation of a method we called Task Continuity Chain, through the use of Task Based Learning - Task-continuity – "chaining of activities" (Nunan, 1989) – to foster vocabulary acquisition skills that will progressively allow students play with the words to build sentences (Willis, 2001, p.129), enhancing vocabulary acquisition and contextualization	1. PARENTAL SUPPORT EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' VOCABULARY ABILITY. 2. TASKS CONTINUITY CHAIN DESIGN RELATION WITH STUDENTS LEARNING STYLES AND AFFECTIVITY. 3. TASKS CONTINUITY CHAIN DESIGN EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' VOCABULARY ABILITY- VOCABULARY ACQUIRED (LEXICAL ITEMS ACQUIRED AND USE IN CONTEXT). 4.INPUT, STORAGE, AND RETRIEVAL. (MCCARTHY, 1990). 5.PROJECT'S IMPLEMENTATION AT HOME BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS AND PARENTAL SUPPORT EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' VOCABULARY ABILITY. 6. PROJECT'S STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND OPPORTUNITIES.

	Secondary No 1 To foster ICT usage through the design and implementation of online tasks that offer the possibilities for students to use Internet and the school's web page to be in contact with the vocabulary learned at school, at home, enhancing vocabulary acquisition skills.	7. TASKS CONTINUITY CHAIN'S FREQUENCY PRACTICE AT HOME. 8. STUDENTS' AUTONOMOUS RESPONSE TO THE METHOD - AUTONOMY DEVELOPMENT.
	Secondary No2 To promote autonomy in students, understood as 'interdependence because language development requires interaction' (Little, 1991), accompanied by parents, not implying total independence. However, independent work is intended to be developed by offering tasks to be practiced at home on their own, developing 'the ability to take charge of their own learning.' (Holec, 1981).	Idem 7 & 8

Theoretical narrative

When our Spanish speaking 4 to 5 years old prekindergarten students - starting their first encounter with a formal school system, - experienced the tasks continuity chain we designed to enhance vocabulary ability, they had to begin a habit formation process accompanied by their parents. As we could expect just few of them had had previous

contact with English learning, and only few of their parents managed the language. The following is the description of how they faced the process.

- PARENTAL SUPPORT EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' VOCABULARY ABILITY.
- TASKS CONTINUITY CHAIN DESIGN RELATION WITH STUDENTS LEARNING STYLES AND AFFECTIVITY.
- TASKS CONTINUITY CHAIN DESIGN'S EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' VOCABULARY ABILITY**:**

To start the implementation of the method, we required to guarantee two clue issues: Parents' collaboration and constant practice at home (*PARENTAL SUPPORT EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' VOCABULARY ABILITY)* which we attempted to assure by getting to know their English knowledge and their understanding of their daughters' needs and possibilities for language learning. (*Background English knowledge and habits for potential parental participation (degree of involvement*)), and student's learning styles and interests to verify the appropriateness of the tasks continuity chain design for our participants. (*TASKS CONTINUITY CHAIN DESIGN RELATION WITH STUDENTS LEARNING STYLES AND AFFECTIVITY).* In this way, we informed participants (students and parents) about our research requirements in terms of language and involvement, and we got to know some of our students' learning styles, study habits and attitude towards English learning (*Students' predisposition towards L2 learning, different learning styles and types of intelligences and connection with the tasks and materials' design).* The conclusions that emerged from the analysis of all this information were that parents were not able to be as involved as we expected, only 15

families out of 44 answered the survey and we attribute this gap of parents' response to the fact that the surveys were set in English. Therefore, from that moment on we decided that the information sent to parents hat to be written in both languages: English and Spanish (Appendix S). Another aspect that was evident was that most of the fathers speak English, but mothers do not. Fortunately, all of them were motivated towards the project. Concerning the tasks continuity chain design, the surveys confirmed us that the tasks were suitable for our students' range of learning styles. For the purpose of this study, we designed a task-continuity chain– "chaining of activities" that forms a sequence in which the successful achievement of previous tasks will lead to the completion of the following ones " – (Nunan, 1989, p.119). We adapted as well Ellis (2003) definition of a task: "work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. The tasks continuity chain design had an effective effect on students' vocabulary ability (*TASKS CONTINUITY CHAIN DESIGN EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' VOCABULARY ABILITY*).

Making a comparison with Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, & Lonigan's study, (2008), "Successful Phonological Awareness Instruction with Preschool Children: Lessons from the Classroom," both studies benefit children by enhancing attention to language instruction and use in preschool context, through an intervention strategy which in our

case is the tasks continuity chain. Our strategy meets children's needs to have opportunities to learn new vocabulary words, and to use new language in natural, functionally relevant situations.

Referring to Bourke, (2006), in his study "Designing a topic-based syllabus for young learners," his findings relate to ours in the effective use of Task Based Approach in language learning for which teaching should relate to the child's world, re-discovering students' daily lives and preferences when designing tasks, with appropriate conditions and environments (Darkin, 1973), where comprehensible input and stress-free. Both studies, Bourke's and ours, offer instances in which children are exposed to language usage in a contextualized way.

Newton's findings "through tasks learners meet language in ways that encourage the construction of multiple associations, between old and new knowledge in their lexical systems." from his study "Options for vocabulary learning through communication tasks", relate to the tasks continuity chain design effects on students' vocabulary ability. Our students were asked to continuously activate their previous knowledge in each task of the chain to show vocabulary ability, as well as to associate meaning in context, having sentence building as a final task and result.

- INPUT, STORAGE AND RETRIEVAL

- TASKS CONTINUITY CHAIN'S FREQUENCY PRACTICE AT HOME

When implementing the project, students' L2 performance was challenged (*INPUT, STORAGE, AND RETRIEVAL).* To start, we decided to make a vocabulary knowledge teacher-made oral pretest (*Prior knowledge - degree of L2 previous vocabulary knowledge in English to be taught -)* showing the following results (See Table 3):
The project elicits positive input (language is 'written' in a graphic way), storage (that is held and not lost), and retrieval (it can be called up when need for use (McCarthy, 1990, p. 34). However, there are some are high flyers or average children who did not practice the tasks continuity chain at home, only at school, they have strong skilled potential towards English learning. Table 3 shows results of vocabulary acquired before, during and after the implementation. (The vocabulary assessed were 35 words, 7 for each introduces letter sound: F, S, M, L, D) (See Table 3 Pre, while and post implementation).

During seven weeks students experienced the chain of tasks progressively: For the first letter introduced *(Tasks continuity chain implementation progression related to frequency and vocabulary ability),* students developed the first task of the chain, memory game. For the second and third letters, they developed four tasks of the chain: memory game, charades, online tasks and collaborative sentence building. For the last two letters, students developed five tasks to complete the chain: memory game, charades, online tasks, collaborative sentence building and pictograph. We found out that the tasks continuity chain implementation at home followed different patterns that showed students' willingness and commitment degree to develop the habit of practicing the tasks continuity chain on their own, as well as parents' response in acquiring such habit (*TASKS CONTINUITY CHAIN'S FREQUENCY PRACTICE AT HOME)* (See

Appendix L). This information revealed students' behaviors towards developing the tasks, and learning language, which implies constant imitation and repetition of the input (oral vocabulary, mimicry of that vocabulary). This "drilling" aspect of the task chain, which objective is to be a tool for students to experience "input, storage and retrieval" (Mc. Carthy), is favored by the Behavioral theory which recognizes language learning as a process of imitation and repetition (rote verbal learning, instrumental learning, discrimination learning) of what is heard, that could not proceed without input. Such "input must be continuous, accurate as an important factor in developing new behaviors" (Brown, 2007, pp. 17-25). In our case, this input consisted of giving students a set of new habits (tasks continuity chain) to be acquired by repeated imitation of correct models of pronunciation of studied vocabulary words, in order to contextualize them and further use them in a communicative way.

- PROJECT'S IMPLEMENTATION AT HOME BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS & PARENTAL SUPPORT EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' VOCABULARY ABILITY.

Our hypothesis includes the use of *Transfer* and r*einforcers*[2] as constructs that serve the Behavioral Theory, applied through the tasks continuity chain design (memory game, charades, online tasks, collaborative sentence building, and pictograph.), this means that students were expected to acquire habits (recognize, exercise, drill, and recall) through stimuli that would finally allow them gain vocabulary ability as a response. The Skill Acquisition Theory (De Keyser, 2001), behavioral in nature, backs

[2] Transfer:Habits from L1 used in attempting to produce L2 (Contrastive Analysis-comparing languages).
Reinforcers: Events or stimuli that follow a response and tend to strengthen behavior or increase probability of a recurrence of that response.

up our theory in reaction times, error rates, differences in performance from one condition to another (See Table 3). It also takes into account interferences, such as L1 interference, when developing the collaborative sentence building task, and accounts of how students progress in learning from initial to advanced. The method experienced by the participants enhanced a learning process in which progress was paced, and had a continuous development from simpler tasks to more complex ones that accounted how learners began acquiring vocabulary, developing positive behaviors and self-confidence each time, leading them to use words in a more customized, fluent and spontaneous way *(Accurate use of vocabulary acquired "that will progressively allow students play with the words to build sentences (Willis, 2001, p.129), enhancing vocabulary ability and contextualization).*

At the end of the implementation, the participants were faced to a post intervention test to assess students' vocabulary ability, which included all the vocabulary taught and practiced (*Post intervention vocabulary ability (degree of L2 vocabulary learned in English).* Surprisingly, the participants had an overall progress, even the students who during the implementation follow-up had a low and average performance

(See the following table and graphs that quantitatively support this theoretical construct).

Table 3

Pre, while and post implementation

Vocabulary ability comparison

Comparison Vocabulary ability Pre, While and Post Implementation				
Group	SS	Teacher-made pretest Previous knowledge diagnostic	While implementation Continuum tasks chain's implementation process and vocabulary ability assessment average. Used as Formative evaluation. (See Appendix H).	Posttest Diagnostic of the overall vocabulary ability development at the end of the implementation. Used as Final evaluation.
P 01	1	2,9%	85%	91,4%
	2	0,0%	85%	74,3%
	3	8,6%	88%	88,6%
	4	0,0%	59%	60%
	5	2,9%	56%	40%
	6	0,0%	51%	65,7%
	7	2,9%	79%	74,3%
	8	0,0%	85%	65,7%
	9	0,0%	62%	71,4%
	10	0,0%	71%	74,3%
	11	2,9%	88%	91,4%
	12	11,4%	62%	91,4%
	13	0,0%	82%	74,3%
	14	0,0%	22%	20%
P 02	1	0,0%	42%	54,3%
	2	5,7%	58%	85,7%
	3	0,0%	31%	37,1%
	4	0,0%	39%	40%
	5	2,9%	94%	100%
	6	2,9%	76%	88,6%
	7	5,7%	94%	88,6%
	8	2,9%	76%	94,3%
	9	0,0%	70%	82,9%
	10	2,9%	91%	100%
	11	0,0%	45%	97,1%
	12	0,0%	68%	77,1%
	13	0,0%	65%	77,1%
	14	0,0%	68%	77,1%
	15	5,7%	70%	88,6%
P 03	1	8,6%	62%	91,4%
	2	5,7%	68%	100%
	3	11,4%	79%	100%
	4	0,0%	62%	82%
	5	2,9%	62%	85%

	6	**5,7%**	**77%**	**100%**
	7	**0,0%**	**59%**	**94,3%**
	8	**14,3%**	**85%**	**100%**
	9	**0,0%**	**36%**	**77,1%**
	10	**0,0%**	**33%**	**85,7%**
	11	**0,0%**	**25%**	**71,4%**
	12	**5,7%**	**68%**	**100%**
	13	**5,7%**	**82%**	**100%**
	14	**0,0%**	**56%**	**97,1%**
	15	**11,4%**	**59%**	**85,7%**

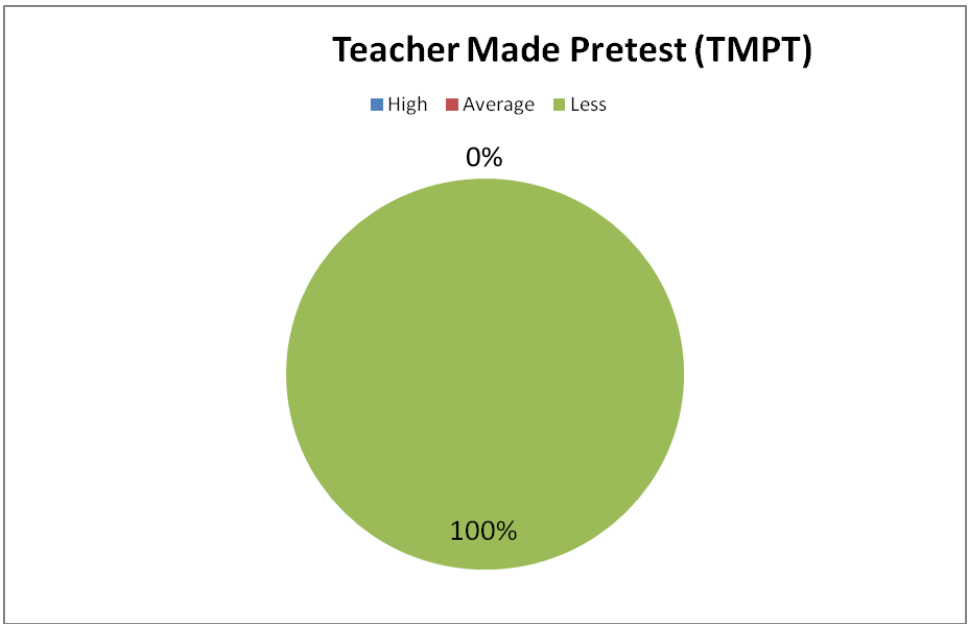
High-flyers range between 76%-100% based on the school's grading system
Average range between 60%-75%
Less successful range between 0%-59%

This table shows evidence of a positive average variation in between the while implementation and the posttest results, which we find as a proof of tasks continuity chain's individual practice once implementation time had passed, and it was done without the teachers' instruction, guaranteeing the effective usage of the method at home.

The following diagrams show the average variation for each of the stages: Teacher made pretest (TMPT), while implementation tests (WIT), and posttest (PT).

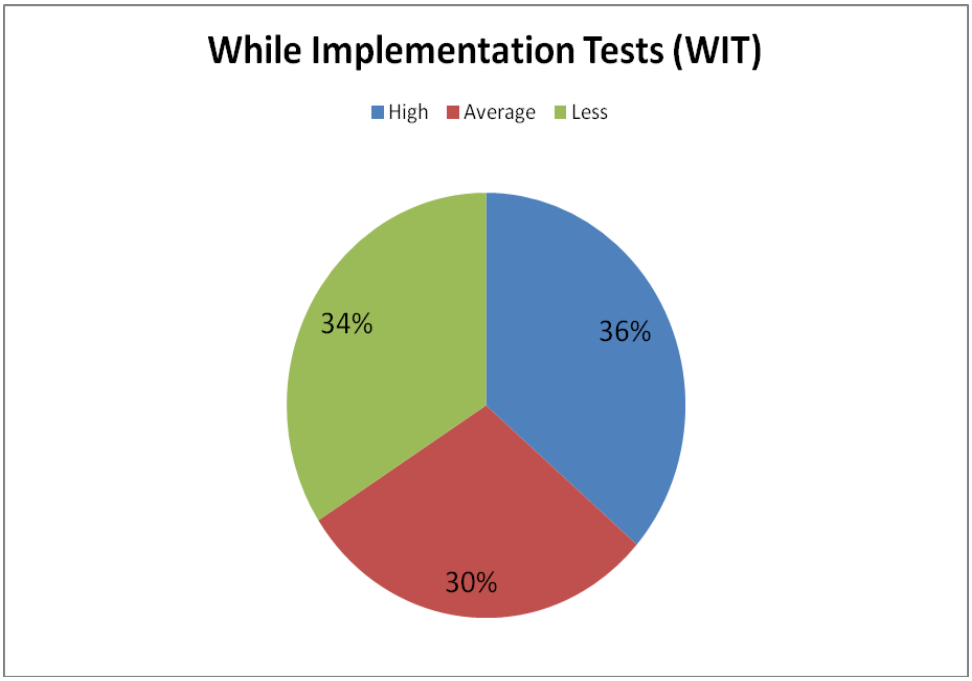
Graph 1

Teacher Made Pretest (TMPT)



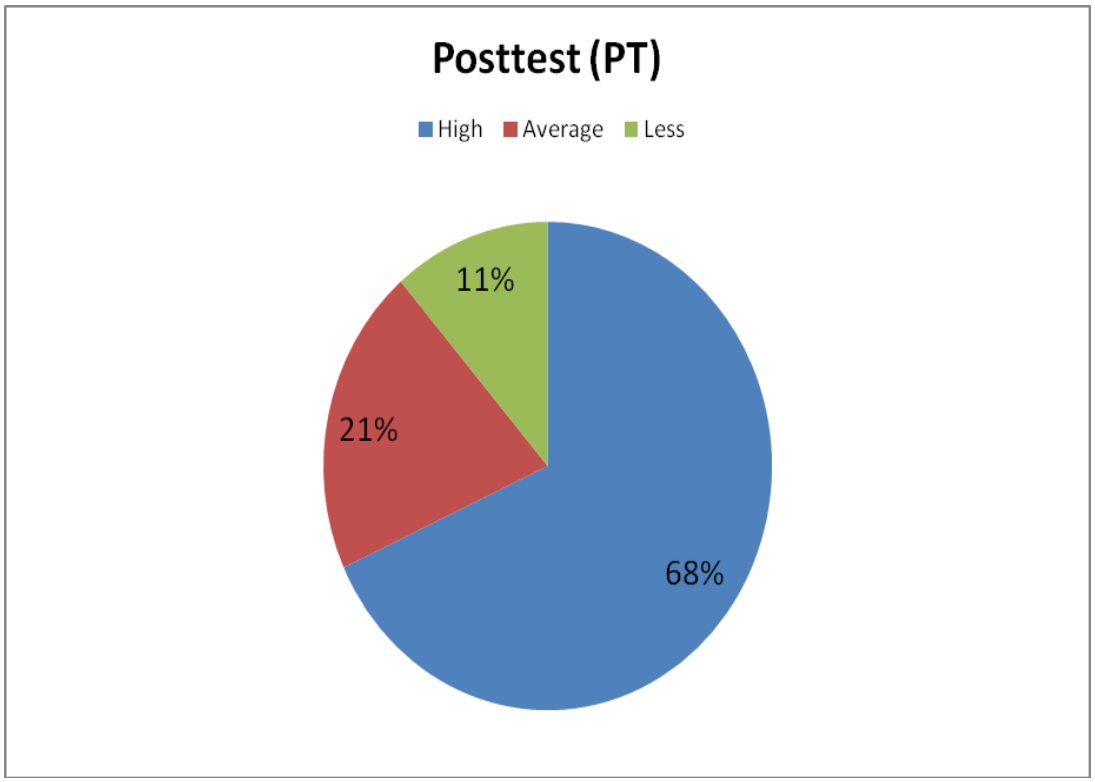
Graph 2

While Implementation Test (WIT)



Graph 3

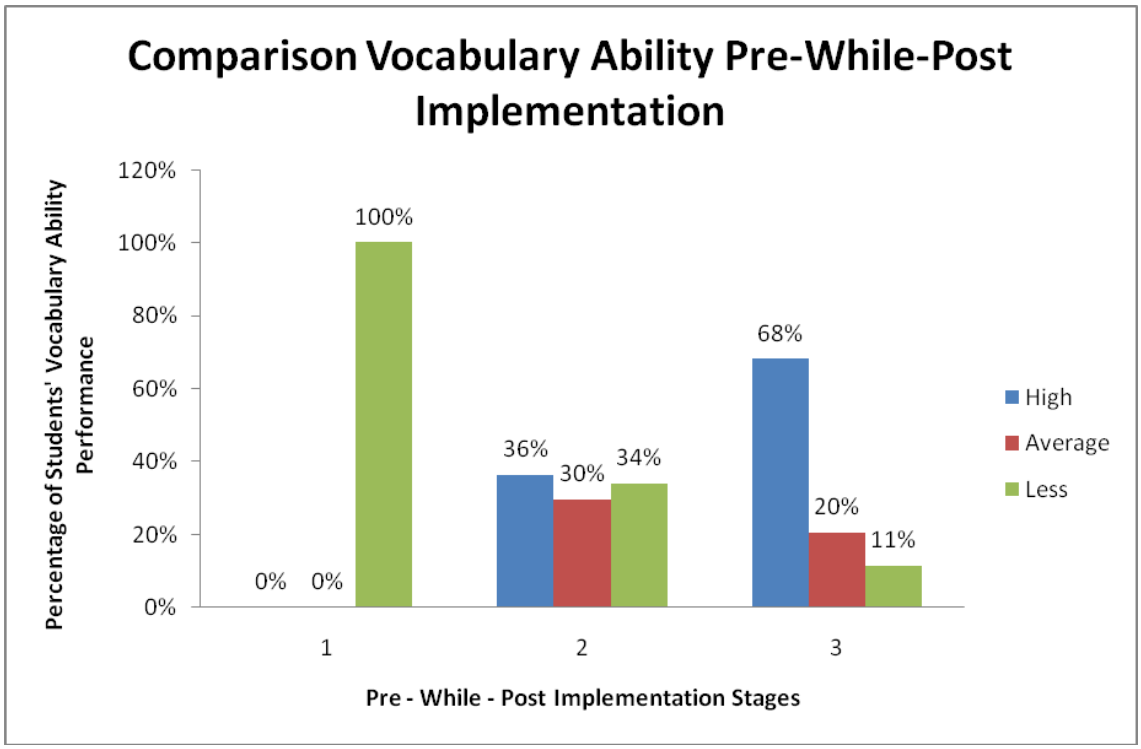
Posttest (PT)



The comparison among the Pre, While and Post Implementation stages clearly shows the students' progress, and effectiveness of the autonomous tasks continuity chain usage at home between the while implementation and the posttest phases. (See Graph 4).

Graph 4

Comparison Vocabulary Ability Pre-While-Post Implementation



The project was designed having in mind two aspects regarding the practice of the tasks: one related to the tasks themselves as fun, entertaining, educational, challenging, didactic, motivational, appealing and engaging activities, and the other related to parental involvement when practicing the tasks at home. Such aspects are related in terms of giving an enriched affective environment for learning. In order to have information about the effects of all this, we decided to send questionnaires home to have parents' feedback – as participants- on the implementation, and progresses of their daughters vocabulary usage in the tasks development at home (PROJECT'S IMPLEMENTATION AT HOME BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS & PARENTAL SUPPORT EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' VOCABULARY ABILITY.) This student-

parent-tasks continuity chain interaction is supported by the Affective Filter Hypothesis, which shows the importance of the affective factors in the process of second language acquisition (SLA) – vocabulary ability in this case –- , since the designed tasks included learner's needs and learning styles with the intention of lowering the affective filter. Some factors we took into account for the implementation of the tasks continuity chain at home involving parents were: motivation self-confidence, and handling anxiety, following Van Patten & Williams statements: "Students who are comfortable, and have a positive attitude toward language learning, have a low affective filter. They seek and receive more input, interact with confidence and are more receptive to the input they receive. On the other hand, a stressful environment, where students are forced to produce, raises the affective filter because it prevents acquisition from taking place." (Van Patten & Willliams , 2006).

Parental involvement helped students feel comfortable and receptive to the input in their "at home" learning environment making their emotional states and attitudes act like a filter that allowed vocabulary ability to take place. (Brown, 2007, p. 26-28). Parents shared their opinions about the positive and not so positive effects of using the method at home **(***Project's positive/negative features related to family involvement and implementation at home);* they enjoyed it and found it fun to learn in family: "It is enjoyable, interesting and a fun way to learn together, for the students and family". Some expressed that the method gave them the opportunity to support their daughters' learning process: "It involves family to support the learning process." as well as to follow up their progresses: "It helps the family to keep track of students' progress and

amount of vocabulary learned." And "It helps parents identify students' strengths and weaknesses." A positive overall effect for parents was that the tasks continuity chain implementation at home "is the perfect combination: learning, playing and collaborating in family." Other values added that parents commented on were:
"It develops self-discipline and the quality of being persistent", "It develops learning autonomy", "It is challenging, it invites and motivates students to achieve goals",
"It develops self-motivation towards language learning", "It helps develop a continuous learning process habit that requires dedication" and "It causes 'incidental learning' because students learn vocabulary while they play without being aware of it."

As conclusive comments from the post implementation questionnaire, parents agreed that: " The method enhances frequency, repetition and fosters the usage of different learning strategies at an early age", "It gives the girls opportunities to approach games, technology and English learning", "Memory is exercised", "Good pronunciation is enhanced,", " it is practical and easy to use", "The method includes a competitive component as a different strategy to learn vocabulary and letters", "The method leads students to realize the importance of acquiring the second language, "The method has shown bilingual parents some innovative ways to teach vocabulary to their daughters".

On the other hand parents perceived obstacles and certain negative issues that popped up during the method's implementation at home. Some of them reported that they were not able to participate due to lack of language knowledge: "I have not been able to practice at home because I do not speak, nor understand English". Others

reported that the method demands time and availability that they do not have due to different reasons such as their jobs: “We don`t spent enough time”, “We don’t have time”, “It is difficult to acquire the discipline to play in English”.

One issue that drew parents’ attention - and ours – towards the continuous practice at home expected, was that “the project demands students’ concentration and practice at home, when they may be tired” after the school’s day, and “playing the tasks all over again, every day becomes boring”. For some parents “Students depend a 100% on their parents’ or adults’ support to practice at home”.

Students were given manipulative material consisting of vocabulary cards made out of paper; this material was generic to be used to develop all the tasks in the chain, concerning this material, parents commented positively and negatively about it (*Project’s design and material’s advantages and disadvantages).* The positive statements about the material included: “It is innovative”, “It is a well-designed tool”, ” It is creative”, “The way the material (vocabulary cards) is handled, helps students customize it when coloring, cutting, and organizing it”. However some parents found gaps in the quality of the paper used and the illustrations: The vocabulary cards’ material is of low quality making them transparent and easy to recognize (for the memory game, especially)”,”one negative aspect is that vocabulary cards are in black and white”.

The parents commented about all the benefits of the method, including some additional values (*Vocabulary ability and values added).* “The method allows quick, effective and evident vocabulary learning.”, “Words became part of student’s every day vocabulary”, “Students recognize the words in different contexts such as while watching

TV, while in the street, and practicing with parents, using phrases or sentences with the vocabulary words" , "The method enhances frequency, repetition and fosters the usage of different learning strategies at an early age", "Memory is exercised", "Good pronunciation is enhanced", "The method includes a competitive component as a different way to learn vocabulary and letters". However, there were some drawbacks according to them as well: "Vocabulary use in context is not evident at home." This is due to the fact that the collaborative sentence building task is not worked at home, only at school, guided by teachers.

Some parents thought that "the method might confuse students because they are faced to learn vocabulary in English when they do not even know how to command Spanish." Even though, this comment came from a couple of families we see it as a reality that must be confronted taking into account students' age, and that some of the students enter the school talking baby talk.

To deal with this aspect, as well as with the vocabulary ability, the project includes the Processability theory (Pienemann, 1998), which implies that L2 acquisition starts with an unmarked functional structure in beginners, and evolves requiring additional processing procedures that will be acquired later. When processing information at any state of development, the learner can produce and comprehend only those second language linguistic forms that the current state of the language processor can handle. In our case, our target group can handle learning words, and identifying them with images. The language processor accounts for language processing in real time, within human psychological constraints, such as word access, and working memory.

The theory includes an implicational hierarchy because each level is prerequisite for processing a skill at the next level (Pienemann and Hakansson, 1999):

1. *"Lemma- word access":* At the beginning our students processed words or lemmas, without any grammatical information neither any ordering rules.

2. *Category procedure:* Lexical items were categorized and used as needed to develop the tasks by students and teachers included implicit grammatical information in the collaborative sentence building task to help students connect the items (words) in context. (e.g. number and gender to nouns, tense to verbs).

3. *Phrasal Procedure:* Operations within the phrase level occurred, when students attempted to retell the collaborative sentences built as a story.

Constructivist Interaction hypothesis was also taken into account based on Brown, (2007); the dynamic nature of the tasks continuity chain interaction between learners and their peers, their teacher, parents and others with whom they interacted and the interpersonal context in which they carried out the tasks, had great significance as opportunities to practice and use the words in a meaningful way, through the development of the method. Here collaborative learning and autonomy were also promoted connecting to "Vygostky's zone of proximal development where students construct the new language through socially mediated interaction". (Brown, 2007). All this having in mind that "The acquisition of the word meanings takes much longer than the acquisition of the spoken form of the words, and children use words in their speech long before they have a full understanding of them" (Locke, 1993). Then, "learning words is a cyclical process of meeting new words and initial learning, followed by meeting those words again and again, each time extending knowledge of what the

words mean and how they are used in the foreign language. Each time children met the vocabulary words while practicing the tasks continuity chain, their approach to those words changed, offering opportunities to expand language usage and their conceptual knowledge. (Cameron, 2001, p. 74).

Our method attempts to make vocabulary meaningful as it is needed and used in each of the chain's tasks. This idea is supported by Collier 1995a; Grosjean 1982; Krashen, 1996 & McLaughlin 1984, (cited by Clark, 2000), "Language learning is not linear... language learning is dynamic, language must be meaningful and be used."

As one of our secondary objectives; parents and students had the opportunity to explore and get acquainted with ICT's usage *(Computer Based Learning (CBL) (Brown, Earlam, & Race, 1998*). - Online tasks usage), through the use of online tasks that were uploaded in the school's web page for self-access. Connectivism theory (Siemens, 2004), supported the fact the inclusion of these online tasks founded on the understanding that new information is continually being acquired, and "Learning may reside in non-human appliances" (Siemens, 2004). Hence online tasks were designed to be used as virtual practice. Such online tasks were meant to nurture and maintain connections to assist continual learning of the selected vocabulary at home (Siemens, 2004). Parents and students were able to decide what to learn and the meaning of incoming input, in other words; they practiced "knowledge management" which is one of Connectivism principles. (Siemens, 2004).

Parents' opinions regarding the use of the online tasks were: "Online tasks complement the practice with vocabulary cards", "Online task are easy to access and use","… are a didactic way to practice vocabulary", "… enhance habit formation and vocabulary ability when taken as a routine", "As homework is great", "it is a fun and enjoyable activity", "It is a good tool, nice to practice with our kids at home, it is creative , we wish all home activities were like that", "it is an excellent method for learning, I like it because the girls educate their hearing and pronunciation of each word accurately, moreover, the drawings and music are "motivating", "we will keep practicing", "Very interesting", "It would be good to include whole the vocabulary to be taught", "Good methodology", "The whole family played…it is a marvelous way to learn", "We are very grateful for this study method", "Fun activity captures attention", "Fabulous", "Congratulations".

Regarding the online tasks design, access and usage at home, there were some aspects to improve highlighted by parents: " The online tasks were used but not with the necessary frequency", "Sometimes, we could not access the tasks", "We lack of time to support the practice with online tasks on a regular basis", "It is difficult to acquire the habit to practice in the computer due to lack of internet connection", "Online tasks' sound was not appropriate at times", "Online tasks should be modeled and practiced at school", "Sometimes playing at the computer is tiring for students.", "Some tasks are difficult".

Our 4 to 5 years old students gave their opinions regarding the method in general *(Students' perceptions and responses to the method) for them:* "Some games were good", "Learning while playing is likeable", "Playing in the computer is fun", "playing with my family is fun". Likewise, they expressed a constrain: "Some games were not so good", and few parents reported that "Students are not always in the mood to play, because due to their age, they expressed to be tired in the afternoons, after school.

- STUDENTS' AUTONOMOUS RESPONSE TO THE METHOD - AUTONOMY DEVELOPMENT

As for the other secondary objective, students experienced a first approach to autonomy (STUDENTS' AUTONOMOUS RESPONSE TO THE METHOD - AUTONOMY DEVELOPMENT) through the practice of the tasks continuity chain at home, which was not imposed. Therefore, the implementation of the method at home was intended to be developed in an autonomous way. The findings regarding the comparison between students' vocabulary ability performance among the Pre-While-Post Implementation stages, revealed evidence of autonomous work, especially in between the While and Post Implementation, since students vocabulary ability improved considerably as shown in Graphic 4, which illustrated continuous practice of the tasks continuity chain on their own, with all the vocabulary taught. Nonetheless, a follow-up format was sent home as a motivational and self-assessment strategy (*Reflection on autonomous work),* but the response was not positive as expected because there were only 12 students (27%) that turned back such format not properly filled in, showing lack

of commitment with this part of the project. Continuing with the autonomous component of the research, some online tasks required students to bring an output (vocabulary illustrations) to share with the class (*Results of autonomous work by the use of online tasks*). Such products were handed in only by 4 students (9%), which also demonstrated either lack of understanding or commitment towards the use of the online tasks. One of our study's secondary objectives was to promote learner autonomy by means of "transferring responsibility for aspects of the language learning process from the teacher to the learner," Cotteral (n.d), which consist of "setting goals, selecting learning strategies, and evaluating progress," according to Cotteral (n.d). In our case, letting students choose the tasks from the chain they wanted to practice at home enhanced the second aspect 'selecting learning strategies'. Concerning the third aspect, evaluating progress of the process, the format 'Daily Achievement' (See Appendix 8) was designed to serve self-assessment on autonomous work at home. As a final result of the implementation, it could be said that the method involved "students' capacity to use their learning independently from teachers," making students' autonomy emerge. (Littlewood, 1999). The method helped students understand and manage their learning in a way that contributed to improve vocabulary ability along their performance on the different tasks, supported by parents who were informed on how to carry out each one of them. Autonomy was developed through interdependence. (Kohonen, 1992)

Newton's findings in his "Options for vocabulary learning through communication tasks" study, shows that through Task Based approach "teachers have different options to enhance attention to vocabulary", from which students may choose according to their interests and learning styles. This directly relates to our research design because the

different tasks of the tasks continuity chain offer students opportunities to choose practice options according to their interests and learning styles, meeting our secondary objective of autonomy development.

- PROJECT'S REQUIREMENTS, STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, and OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

During the implementation and for effects of triangulation, we as participants-researchers took notes on different issues *(Approaches and behaviors while implementing the tasks in class)* that raised along its development (PROJECT'S REQUIREMENTS, STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, and OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS). (See Appendix O). Some of the strengths found were: Students interest towards Memory Game during the first four letters introduced; students enjoyed coloring and cutting the cards; students enjoyed the practice of charades and pictograph in class (as model for them to practice at home) as well as the collaborative sentence building (done only at school), which assured understanding of the usage of vocabulary words in context assisted by L1. A further consideration focuses on "epistemological traditions in relation to learning: Objectivism, Pragmatism, and Interpretivism.

Objectivism (similar to behaviorism) states that reality is external and is objective, and knowledge is gained through experiences. Transferring this concept into the project means: Vocabulary is objective and is acquired through experiences or tasks in a repeated exposure to it.

Pragmatism (similar to cognitivism) states that reality is interpreted, and knowledge is negotiated through experience and thinking. Transferring this concept into the project

means: Vocabulary words are meant to be owned by the learner, who interprets, and negotiates knowledge through thinking when .developing the tasks.

Interpretivism (similar to constructivism) states that reality is internal, and knowledge is constructed." Transferring this concept into the project means: Vocabulary is internalized in order to use it in context and construct knowledge. (Siemmens, 2007).

Some of the weaknesses consisted on: 18% of the students started to express boredom towards the Memory Game task, when introducing the fifth letter; 15% of the students had trouble cutting the cards appropriately; 45% of the students tended to cover the illustrations when coloring them, making them illegible; coloring and cutting the cards in class was time consuming. Therefore, vocabulary cards were sent home for students to color and cut them under parents' supervision, leaving class time to assure more practice on the tasks continuity chain; there was a general sense of parental lack of commitment and involvement in following all the tasks in the chain.

Since students were not able to recall the whole sentences on their own, only the words learned by filling the gaps left by the teacher when telling the sentences; drawing the individual sentence building illustration, (after the collaborative one) using the learned words, assisted by L1 could have been a great data source to prove students' vocabulary usage in context, but there was no time to listen to each of them retelling their own creations;

Some of the opportunities to improve the method applied for future use were stated: the quality of the material (paper) used to make the vocabulary cards should be revised, sample vocabulary cards used by the teacher need to be bigger and colorful to be more appealing for the students.

During the Collaborative story telling time, students connected the vocabulary acquired using L1 words to complete their ideas, which were translated to L2 by the teacher, enhancing echoing of the right target language structures; while checking students' individual vocabulary usage through the sentence telling, the opportunity for the rest of the group to create a sentence individually popped up, this activity was added to the chain while implementation opening a space for individual storytelling.

As support for the weakness and opportunity on collaborative and individual building sentence time and based on Kooslyn's statements (1983), "young children rely strongly on imagery, something that should certainly be taken into account in early education.", we must continue stimulating our students' visualization abilities to foster oral language production through students'building sentences and telling them.

According to Neville's suggestion, (1989), "simple exercises must be used to retrain the imagining, which like language significantly affects the child's ability to learn, to develop peer and adult relationships, to pursue goals and to experience pleasure." That is why we included in the project the use of building sentences as an exercise to develop imagery, creativity, visual memory, productive skills, participation, collaborative learning and interpersonal skills.

Using a ‘Sentence building” (Wills, 2001) strategy for students to practice and internalize new vocabulary, as well as to gain confidence in ‘building’ L2, are stated by Ellis and Brewster (1991, p.1-2). The sentences built by students serve as short stories “Stories can enrich the pupils’ learning experience. Stories are motivating and fun and can help develop positive attitude towards L2. Stories exercise the imagination and are a useful tool in linking fantasy and the imagination with the child’s real world.” Moreover, “listening to stories in class is a shared social experience. Children enjoy listening to stories over and over again. This repetition allows language items to be acquired and reinforced. Listening to sentences built in a collaborative or independent way develops the child’s listening and concentrating skills. Sentence building creates opportunities for developing continuity in children’s learning in order to create stories.

Some of the threats were: Online tasks were not introduced and practiced at school due to lack of time, which seemed to be a constraint for students’ further practice at home. They were left to practice with parents, which did not assure real use of them; parents informed to feel overwhelmed because of the amount of information received at the beginning of the schooling process, and during the research implementation; students’ constant absences affected their follow-up of the tasks ‘procedures, even though the materials and instructions were sent home as soon as they returned to school.

Chapter 6

Conclusions, Pedagogical Implications and Further Research

Conclusions

This section will recall the research objectives, summarize the findings, and offer conclusions based on them. Recommendations for future research will be proposed, in terms of how to enrich and expand this research study. The contribution of this research to the development of vocabulary ability in English language learning in early childhood will be stated. Furthermore, a reflection on the research process undertaken and on the objectives stated at the start of this research will be shared, including valuable considerations.

The project's main objective was the implementation of a method through the use of Task Based Learning - Task-continuity – "chaining of activities" (Nunan, 1989) – to foster vocabulary acquisition skills that will progressively allow students play with the words to build sentences (Willis, 2001, p.129), enhancing vocabulary acquisition and contextualization.

The secondary objectives were to foster ICT usage through the design and implementation of online tasks, and to promote autonomy in students.

The findings in the form of theoretical constructs were related to:

-Parental support effects on students' vocabulary ability.

-Tasks continuity chain design relation with students learning styles and affectivity.

-Tasks continuity chain design effects on students' vocabulary ability- Vocabulary acquired (lexical items acquired and use in context). Input, storage, and retrieval. (McCarthy, 1990). (See Table 3 Pre, while and post implementation).

-Tasks continuity chain's frequency practice at home.

- Project's implementation at home benefits and drawbacks and parental support effects on students' vocabulary ability.

-Students' autonomous response to the method - Autonomy development.

-Project's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

Based on the above, this study's conclusions were:

Through the tasks continuity chain systematic application, it was evident that most of the students improved their performance, especially when supported by parents, and when motivated to learn autonomously, using the tasks continuity chain as a continuum at home.

The tasks continuity chain, when implemented as a habit at home, had a positive learning effect, which could be applied as a self-access reinforcement continuum.

The online tasks gave a model of correct pronunciation that as effect helped parents who did not manage the language in order to support students at home, enhancing as well phonological awareness, which is the basis for teaching the vocabulary.

Parental support was an effect that also had a positive result on students' vocabulary ability.

The amount of activities that required parents' participation was significant, which favored their degree of involvement throughout the method's implementation providing affectivity to back up the process and lower anxiety.

The tasks continuity chain designed had positive effects regarding emerging behaviors, such as discipline, study habits, and interest towards language learning and computer based learning.

The method offered a prospect for students' autonomy development.

The method had strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to be worked out for future implementation.

Language learning is easy when the child is actively involved in the learning process; it is the learner who does the learning and the teacher's role is to facilitate the learning process in a structured way.

Unexpected conclusions

There was improvement in listening skills, pronunciation as a speaking sub-skill, 'reading' (recognizing and reminding vocabulary from images), as well as vocabulary usage in context.

This research also helped scaffold students' self-regulated learning, metacognition and autonomy during their practice with the online tasks.

The online tasks go beyond the target population's use because of its easy access through the school's web page which makes it available for anyone who wants to explore them (e.g. for tutoring, reinforcement or leveling students, for parents to use with their other children).

The tasks continuity chain procedure offers opportunities for creative teachers, students and parents to change or add new tasks.

Pedagogical Implications

The tasks continuity chain offered opportunities for contact with the target language beyond school as informal practice.

The task chain meets Tanner and Green's, (1998 p.11) effective presentation techniques for introducing new vocabulary as follows:

Tanner and Green's Techniques (1998)	Task Chain's features
Not be too long	Each of the chain's tasks is sufficiently short appropriate for students' attention span.
Include enough and relevant examples;	Each task and each vocabulary cards set has been enough exemplified at school to be reproduced at home, using relevant examples; Family, feelings, etc.
Include clear/interesting visuals	The tasks continuity chain includes clear and appealing visuals in black and white to develop students' fine motor skills through coloring. However, there must be a set of bigger and colorful vocabulary cards to be used to exemplify and develop the tasks in class.
Use drama.	Drama is used when mimicking to develop the charades task, as well as while introducing the vocabulary words.
Include clear explanations	It includes clear L2 oral explanations in class, and written explanations for parents (sent home). It allows students expand on their feelings and thoughts by means of their mother tongue support.

Contrast with L1	It allows contrasting both languages (L1 and L2), and using mother tongue as a support in the collaborative sentence building task.
Include interaction (with each other and with words)	It includes interaction with words, each other, teachers, parents and even when interacting with the online tasks.
Be involving,	It is involving; vocabulary comes from songs, books, related to topics from Harcourt Trophies program that are linked to students‘ life such as the school, and the family
Include practice	It includes practice, at school and at home connecting physical and virtual learning spaces.
Be an effective check of understanding	It is an effective check of understanding because gives learners real examples of the word’s pronunciation, visual representation and use.
Be meaningful	It is meaningful, because vocabulary is needed to play in games, therefore language is needed for communication. Families’ involvement engages students affectively and motivates them through parental exemplification, sharing time and willingness to learn.
Be amusing , interesting	It is amusing and interesting because in-class and at home practice are turned into a set of games, not only for the students but for the whole family.
Hold attention	It holds attention because it challenges students.
Be memorable, dramatic, exciting	It is memorable, dramatic, exciting because it involves evoking moments of leisure, natural children’s need to play, and education in the family environment, and it connects with web/net elements,

Use or link to learners' present knowledge."	Use or link to learners' present knowledge because is related to their everyday L1 language, and to transfer what learned in L1 to L2 and vice versa.However, it includes Krashen's Input Hypothesis) L+1 (Krashen, 1981).

The online tasks gave a model of correct pronunciation that as effect help parents to who did not manage the language in order to support students at home.

Parental involvement should be considered as a support to assure positive results on students' vocabulary ability, providing affectivity to back up the process and lower anxiety.

The Tasks continuity chain design responded to students' learning styles and affective needs, due to the variety of tasks types included and the opportunity to interact with peers and family.

The Tasks continuity chain design enhanced students' vocabulary ability, assuring input, storage, and retrieval. (McCarthy, 1990), through the language used in the development of each task, and the repeated usage (of language) when practiced continuously at home.

Through carrying out this research project, we reflected upon our teaching practices, before, during and after its implementation, which helped us enhance our professional development towards vocabulary teaching based on making informed decisions. (Mills, 2000).

The tasks continuity chain effects on vocabulary ability were:

- Self learning habit formation.

- Input, storage, and retrieval (Mc Carthy, 1990).

- Progressive engagement of students to play with the words, to use them and to build sentences in context (Willis, 2001, p.129).

Limitations

We found some limitations that challenged the accomplished and future implementation of the action plan:

Lack of parental involvement: The amount of activities that required parents' participation was significant, and there were some parents who could not cope with this requirement due to different reasons (e.g. job`s schedule, lack of English language management, lack of commitment.

Lack of parental understanding of procedures, which affected their interest and commitment diminishing students' opportunities to develop the tasks continuity chain at home.

Lack of class time to listen to students retelling the collaborative sentence building they illustrated and to take students to the computer lab to introduce the online tasks, in advance, in order to motivate them to practice at home.

Lack of parental technological management, which restricted students' access to online tasks.

Further Research/Recommendations

It is indispensable to take students to the Computer Lab(s) and train them in the use of the online tasks, and CBL - Computer Based Learning (mouse skills development and key board management).

Questionnaires and other type of written information to be given to parents must be written in both English and Spanish to assure comprehension.

There was a lack of language knowledge from parents that made the instructions difficult to follow; therefore it is necessary to write all the information to be sent to parents in English and Spanish.

Due to lack of time, listening to the students trying to retell the collaborative sentence building they illustrated was not possible. It is advisable to have a second cycle to make arrangements or re-design the procedure in order to leave space for this important and meaningful activity for the students.

It is recommended to include verbs in the vocabulary selected in order to widen students' range of words for using them in the collaborative sentence building task.

Since the study was done only on the first three months of the school year, it is recommended to include other innovative tasks for future vocabulary introduction, making continuous practice at home more motivational, along the school year.

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Appendix A - Research Project Timeline (Action Plan), implementation and Data collection

Activity/Date	February				March				April				May				August				September				October				November			
	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4	W 1	W 2	W 3	W 4
Step 1: Initiation																																
Step 2: Preliminary Investigation																																
Step 3: Literature review																																
Step 4: Design of action plan																																
Step 5: *Implementation (Pre stage)*																																
***(While stage)* Step 6: Monitoring/data collection**																																
***(Post stage)* Step 7: Analysis and interpretation of data**																																
Step 8: Reflection & decision making																																
Step 9: Sharing findings																																

Timeline of Research question – Design of action plan

Research project activities	Month 2009	Week (Dates)	Activity	Description	Comments
Step 1: Initiation	February	February, 14 – 21	Reflection	The role of the teacher in the language classroom – reflection upon the role as language teachers and researchers.	The reflection was done upon the methodology used to teach vocabulary to PK, and the results observing students' patterns, which lead to the questions: How can students be motivated to drill and use the vocabulary at school and home? How to develop vocabulary acquisition and its usage in context?
Step 2: Preliminary investigation	March April	March 14 - April - 25	Justification	Write a paper to discuss the topic, research question and justification of the research proposal.	
Step 3; Literature review	February March April	February 14– 28 March 14 - 29 April 18 - 25	Bibliography project	Annotated bibliography.	
Step 4: Design of action plan	May August	May 2 – 30 August 14-28.	Action Plan design	Research question, objectives, justification, Literature review, pedagogical intervention. Research question Instruments to be used.	Changes in the initial research question and proposal were done.
Step 5: *Implementation (Pre stage)*	August September	31/08/09 – 4/09/09	Implementation and data collection	See detailed Timeline of Data Collection and Implementation (Annex1)	
Step 6: Monitoring/ data collection *(Implementation - While stage)*	September October	07/09/09 – 23/10/09	Data collection		

Step 7: Analysis and interpretation of data *(Implementation - Post stage*	October	24/10/09 – 30/10/09			
Step 8: Reflection & decision making	November	01/11/09 – 06/11/09	Reflecting and decision making.		
Step 9: Sharing findings	November	03/11/09 – 06/11/09	Sharing findings	PPT	

Timeline of Data Collection and Implementation

Stage	Month	Week (Dates)	Activity	Data Collection Instrument(s)	Comments
Pre-stage	September	31/08/09 - 04/09/09	1) To give consent letter to school. 2) To send consent letters to parents. 3)To find out about students' background knowledge in ELL through: 3.1) Applying the diagnostic activity with students. 3.2) Piloting surveys for parents and students.	3.1) Diagnostic activity – tally sheet 3.2) Surveys for parents at survey monkey http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=seq0_2fTDj7I8Sae0RKF5kOA_3d_3d http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=vvhyadf5tjBebbsZWhho3Q_3d_3d Analyzing data	2) There are still three families that have not returned the consent letter slip signed. 3.1) The diagnostic activity results are being analized. 3.2) Only 12 families out of 44 have answered the surveys. Action after piloting: - Instead of having interviews with parents we will use a questionnaire, due to the fact that it is difficult to have an appointment just for this kind of matter. However they will be invited to and we will try to have at list few - Notes will be sent, to remind parents about different aspects of the English project.

While-stage	September	07/09/09 – 11/09/09	1) To introduce F vocabulary at school/home by means of a Memory game.	Autonomy chart Observation and note taking – tally sheets	Autonomy chart has not been approved by English area coordinator yet.
		14/09/09- 18/09/09	1) Implementing F vocabulary pictograph/assessment & Story telling. 2) To introduce S Vocabulary at school/home: by means of memory game	- Sentences building drawings. - Parents feedback at random. Autonomy chart (daily achievements) Log - Observation and note taking – tally sheets	

		21/09/09-25/09/09	1) Implementing S vocabulary pictograph/assessment & Story telling. 2) To introduce M Vocabulary at school/home by means of memory game & Charades game.	Sentences building drawings. - Parents feedback at random. Autonomy chart (daily achievements) Observation and note taking - Tally sheets	
		28/09/09-30/09/09	1) Implementing M vocabulary pictograph/assessment & Story telling. 2) To introduce L Vocabulary at school/home by means of memory game & Charades game.	- Sentences building drawings. - Parents feedback at random. Autonomy chart (daily achievements) Observation and note taking	01/10/09 Autonomy Chart – Daily achievement sent home.
	October	01/10/09-02/10/09			
		05/10/2009 – 12/10/2009 SCHOOL'S RECESS WEEK Analyzing data – preview/reflection			
		13/10/09 – 16/10/09	1.Implementing L vocabulary assessment – Story telling. 2. Introducing D Vocabulary at school/home: memory game Charades game.	- Sentences building drawings. - Parents feedback at random. Autonomy chart (daily achievements) Observation and note taking	

		19/10/09 – 23/10/09	Implementing D vocabulary assessment – Story telling.	- Sentences building drawings. - Parents feedback at random. - Students' survey on progress and use of the task chain. - Questionnaire for parents, and interview at random. - Oral Students'-test. Autonomy chart (daily achievements) Observation and note taking	
Post-stage	October	26/10/09 - 30/10/09	Analysis and interpretation of data.	Qualitative analysis - Thematic Analysis - Content Analysis. Quantitative Analysis - Descriptive statistics - Inferential statistics.	

Appendix B

ICELT LESSON PLAN FORM

Name of teacher: Dalia Diaz & Monica Orjuela	**Candidate Number:**
Institution: Gimnasio Femenino	
Date of Observation: **DAY** **MONTH** **YEAR** 23 09 2009	**Time of observation** 10:00 -11:20 am **Length of class** 80'
Class/grade: Prekindergarten (Named Premontessori)	**Room:** Gimnasio Femenino's Preschool computers lab
Number of students: 29 (Two groups of 14 and 15 students each)	**Average age of Students:** 3-4
Number of years of English study (students): N.A.	**Level of students** *(please circle)* Elementary **Intermediate** **Advanced**
Lesson Number *(please circle)* **1** **2** **3** **4**	**Observer:** VALERIYA LYTVYCHENKO LIUBAVA SICHKO

Aims: 1

At the end of the lesson the students will be able to identify and name most of the introduced words with beginning sound 'S', and to use them to tell a story.

Personal aims:

- To be able to implement ICT's use in Prekindergarten.
- To implement task based activities such as collaboratively creation of a story.
- To self - monitor the language in use in class.
- To self - monitor time usage.

Assumed knowledge:

Vocabulary with beginning sound 'S' such as snake, sandwich, school, sun, spoon, sing, slide.

Description of language item / skill

Vocabulary with beginning sound 'S'

Snake, sun, sandwich, school, spoon, sing, slide.

Materials/Equipment

Computer and video beam. Alphabet song using a YouTube video

Learning product - Vocabulary with beginning sound 'S'-

Vocabulary box (with vocabulary cards.)

Beginning sound 'S' Vocabulary cards – worksheets (Annex 3)

Pencils, colors and paper sheets.

Rationale part 1: Profile of the learners

1. The target population for the project is composed by 44 girls, whose age ranges between 3 and 5 years old, divided into two groups of 15 students and one of 14. The lesson will be addressed to two of those groups. They are **Level 1-Starting**, (**TESOL Standards, March 2006).** They are starting to get used to listen to English and they are attempting to learn basic expressions and classroom language. They are in their "Preoperational stage" (Piaget, 1972 cited by Brown, 2007, p.65), in which language development is one of the hallmarks of this phase where in through playing children become increasingly adept at using symbols. Furthermore,"operations being internalized by sets of actions will allow them to do mentally what before did physically." (Cognitive development of early childhood, n.d.).

2. The students Linguistic needs are:

   Curiosity to learn new vocabulary and lexical chunks in the new language – English–.
   Opportunities to use the language learned.
   Skills developing needs to cope with Task based lessons.
   Mixed ability developmental activities.
   To be trained on integrated skills:
   Pronunciation: phonics – phonological awareness, vocabulary build up.
   Pronunciation: stress, rhythm, intonation.
   Contextualization of vocabulary and activities.

   The students' affective needs are:
   Personal attention, motivation and teacher direction.
   They require to be fostered to develop concentration and self confidence through learner training: by giving them opportunities to build up coordination, cooperation, routines, autonomy, and focus, as well as to experience values such as: Sharing, responsibility, caring.
   Another basic ability to be developed by these students is fine-gross motor skills, basic pencil control skills and proper posture.
   At this age it is necessary to take into account students' basic physical needs, such as going to the bathroom and drinking water, into the class time and routines.

   Lesson delivery needs: Since students are dynamic, joyful and very participative, and they love games, group work, songs, contests, acting out activities, etc, the teachers will include varied activities that promote these types of interaction S-S with the objective of fulfilling the aims of the lesson, at the same time they spend a good time by learning through ICT tools. Moreover, it is mandatory to have these varied activities in a lesson since students' attention span at this age tends to be low.

3. The aims of the lesson are related to learners' needs outlined by the activities and tasks which develop oral skills and basic fine motor skills as a basis for developing self confidence, autonomy, meaning and comprehension. Cooperative learning through a collaborative construction of a story "can help foster social skills needed to interact and communicate equitable" (Crandall, cited by Arnold 1999),

Rationale part 2: Anticipated problems

Anticipated problems	Planned solutions
1. Problems of articulation	1. Drilling words activity (It might take extra time) as a challenge in order to work the most difficult ones. Vocal exercises. Give personal attention, support and modelling to the student
2. Students' lack of attention. 3. Students will have difficulties to respect each others turn to participate when creating the story. 4. Some students' disruptive tendency.	2. Catching students' attention through the use of a song or rhyme and by lowering our tone of voice. 3. The teacher will show the importance of respecting each other's ideas when working collaboratively. 4. Recalling student's attention through the use of another counting song they already know (one, two…. buckle my shoe; three four…. shut the door, five six… pick up sticks; seven, eight… lay them straight…. Nine, ten…. Begin again .(Twice)

Stage	Aim	Procedure Teacher and student activity	Time and interaction	Tutor's Comments
1	To get students contextualized in the class.	Students and teacher will sing a Good morning song, Teacher will find out if students went to the bathroom. Once students are ready, the teacher will introduce the Alphabet song using one of the following YouTube videos: ABC song. Retrieved on September 10, 2009 from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OS51i8qhws8&feature=related	T – SS 10′	
2	To get the students interested in the class topic and introduce the vocabulary.	The alphabet song in phonics. Retrieved on September 10, 2009 from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGjQn0IkpUU&feature=channel	T- SS 5′	
3	To get the students interested in the class topic and learning	The teacher will play tricks with a "magic box" to recall the words with beginning sound 'S' through the use of vocabulary cards: snake, sun, sandwich, spoon, school, sing and slide. Students will participate in the tricks and will follow teacher's directions to emphasize the first sound of the words	T-SS 5′	
4			T-SS	

	activity by using ICT's tools: videos (internet links).	shown. The teacher will use an especially designed Learning object to recall the vocabulary by having volunteers	25′
5	To reinforce the vocabulary while illustrating it in worksheets.	playing with it. (Parents have been notified about their access to this "self access - Learning object" – S task– through the school's web page to practice at home.)	SS T-SS
	a.To engage the students in a collaborative story telling activity.	Students will collaboratively create a story using the vocabulary related with letter 'S'. Each student will illustrate the created story on a paper sheet.	SS-SS (Time for all 3 parallel activities 25′)
6	b. To assess each students' knowledge of the vocabulary.	Students will illustrate the studied words on a worksheet.	T-SS SS-SS 10′
	To wrap up the class experiences	Each student will create her own story. While students work independently, teacher will call one by one for oral assessment. Note: students that finish their work may: - Join a group to play memory game. - draw more stories on the board or on a paper - Look for related information or for the - vocabulary learned in different books. As a closure, students will gather round and	

	teacher will check vocabulary knowledge, synthesize experiences and use the vocabulary retelling the collaborative created story.		

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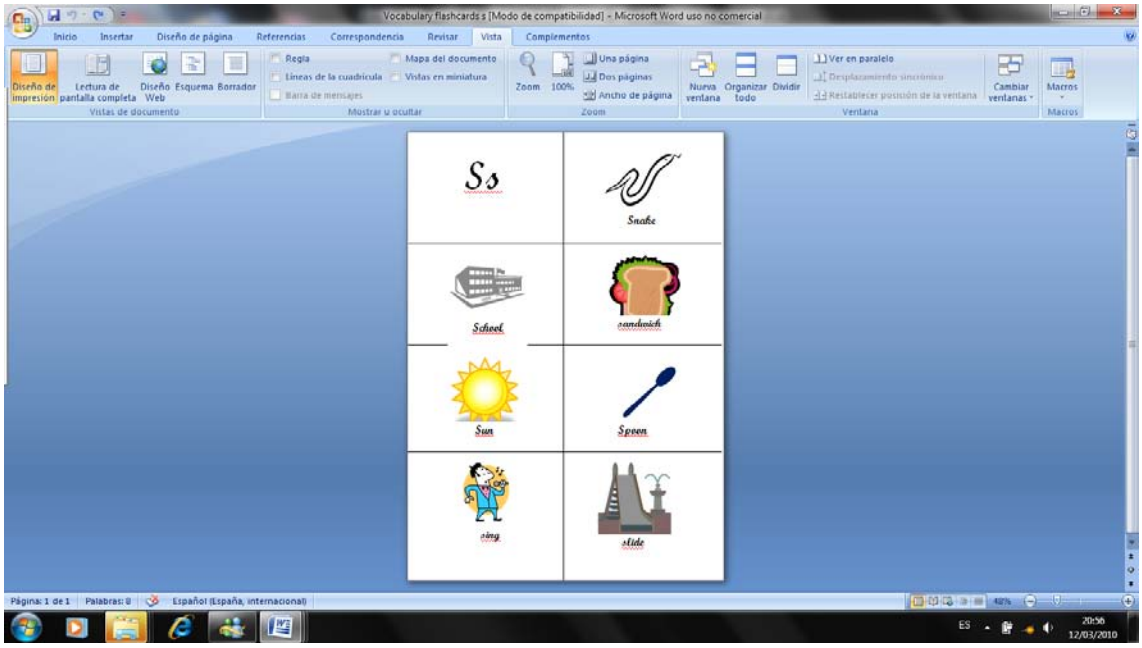
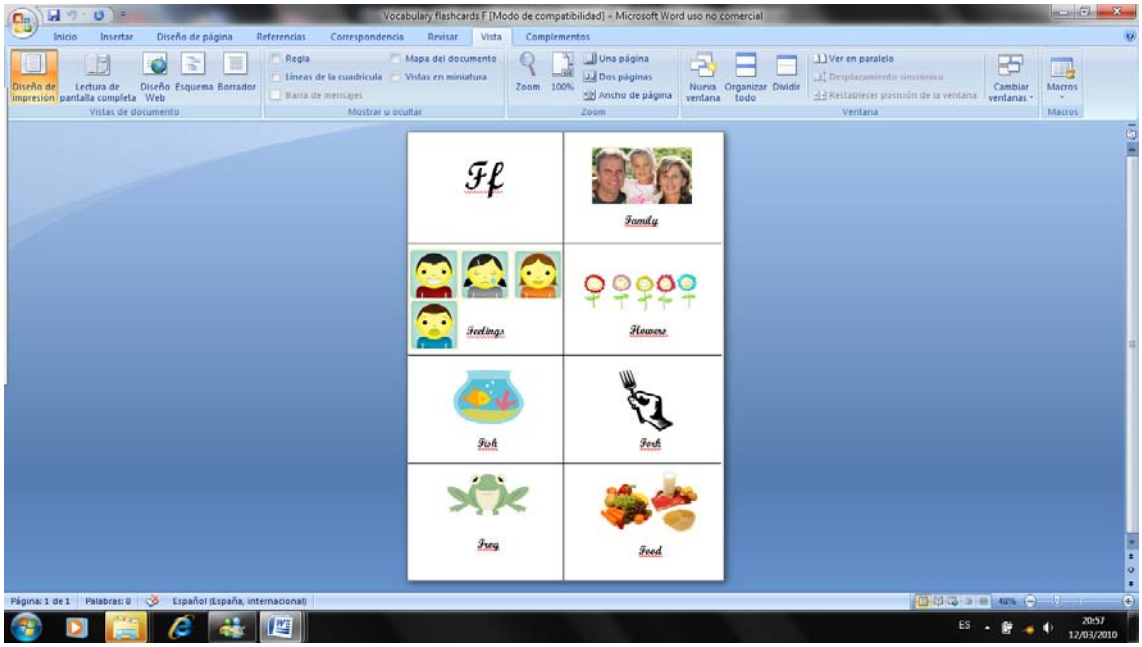
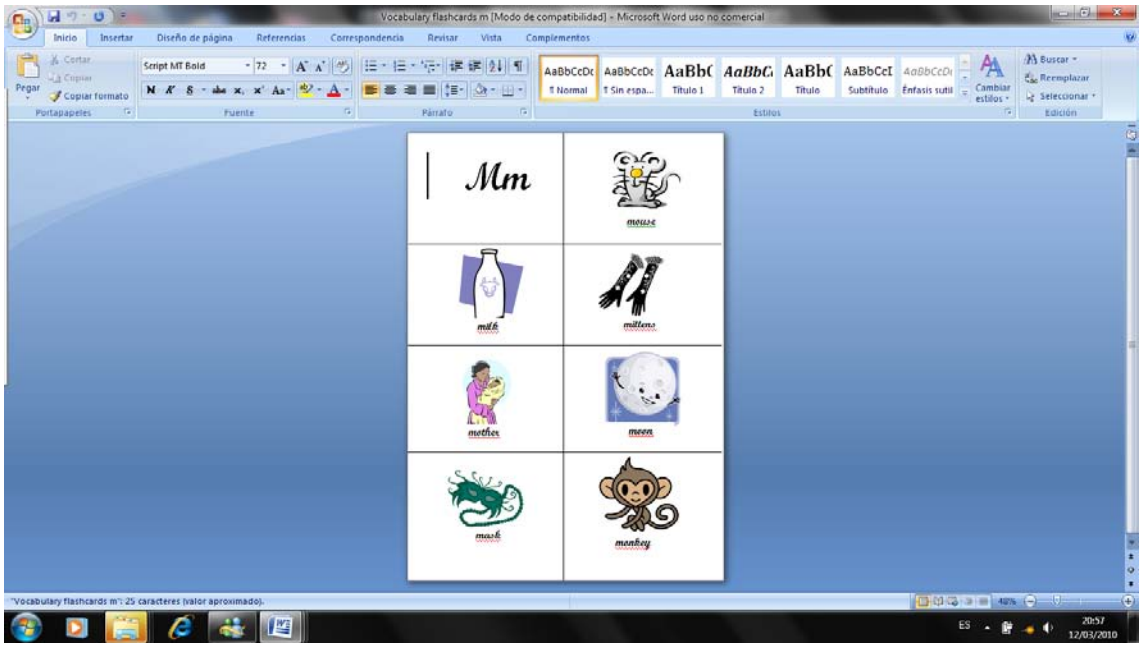
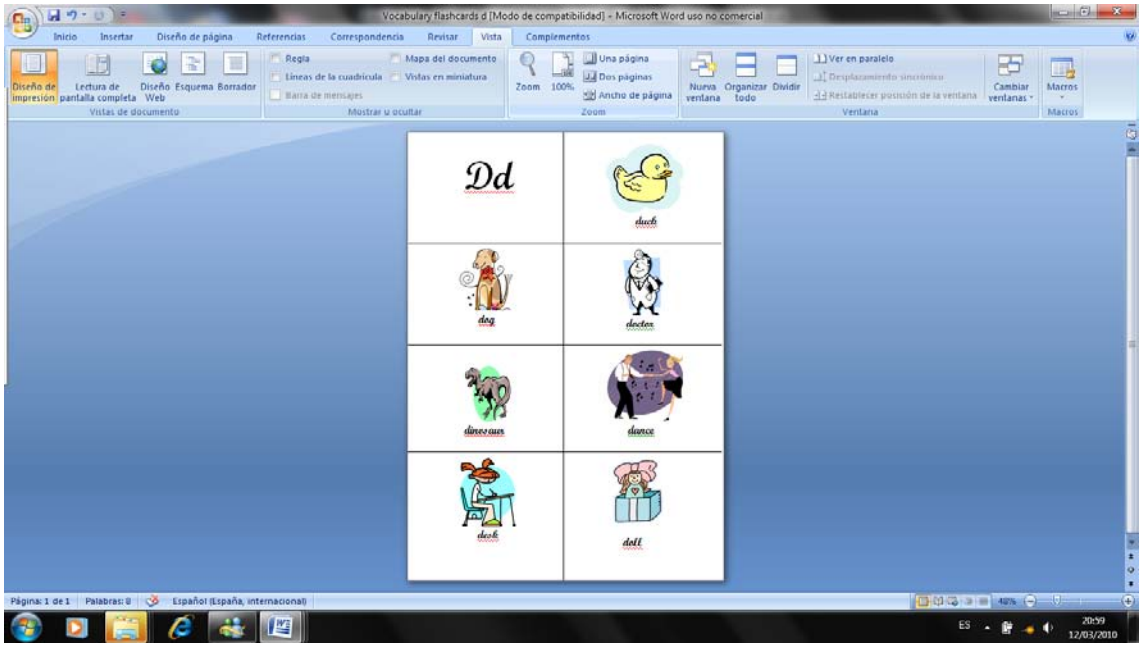
The alphabet song in phonics. Retrieved on September 10, 2009 from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGjQn0IkpUU&feature=channel

Appendix C
Sample Material – Vocabulary cards letters f, s, m, d




Vocabulary flashcards F [Modo de compatibilidad] - Microsoft Word uso no comercial
Ff
Family
Feelings
Flowers
Fish
Fork
Frog
Food


Vocabulary flashcards m [Modo de compatibilidad] - Microsoft Word uso no comercial
Mm
mouse
milk
mittens
mother
moon
mask
monkey

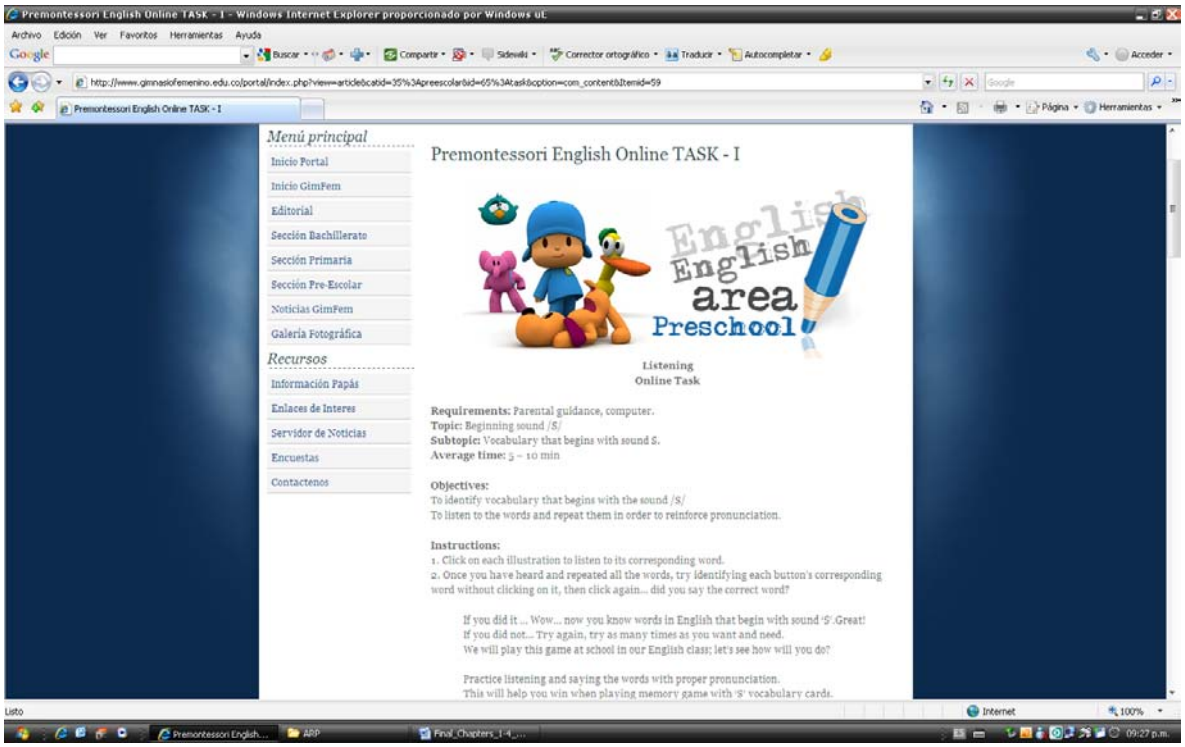


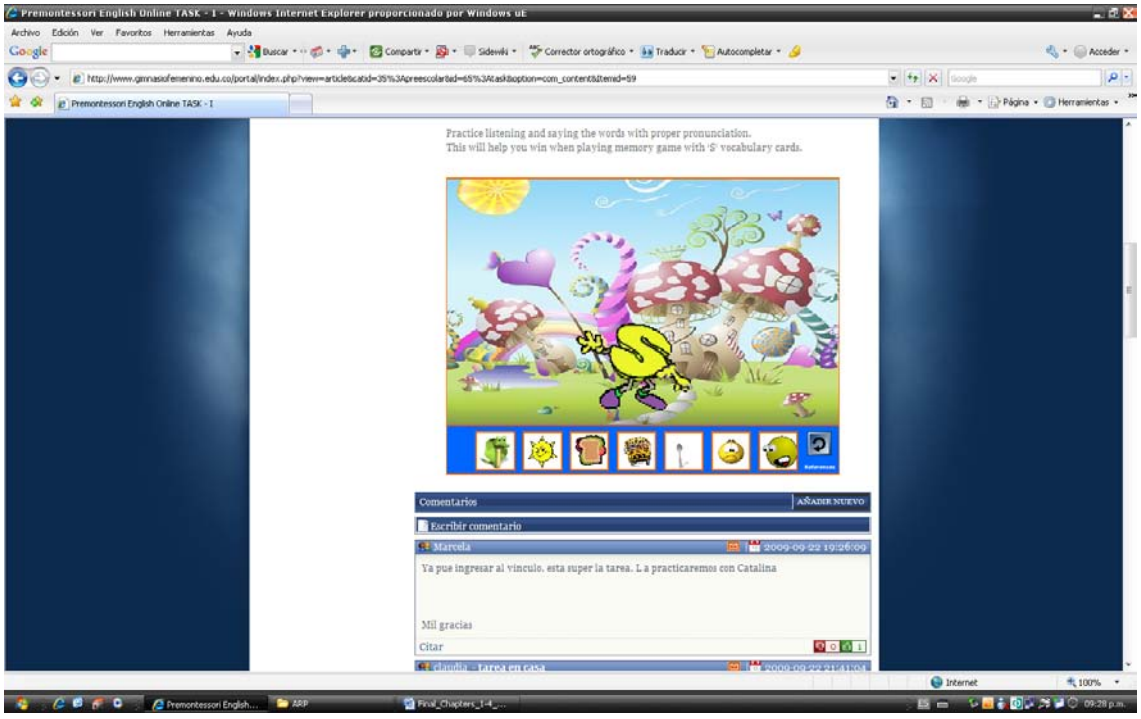
Appendix D

Sample online tasks

Retrieved from
http://www.gimnasiofemenino.edu.co/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=35&Itemid=59

Vocabulary Ability Development in Prekindergarten Students


Premontessori English Online TASK - I - Windows Internet Explorer proporcionado por Windows uL
Menú principal
Inicio Portal
Inicio GimFem
Editorial
Sección Bachillerato
Sección Primaria
Sección Pre-Escolar
Noticias GimFem
Galería Fotográfica
Recursos
Información Papás
Enlaces de Interes
Servidor de Noticias
Encuestas
Contactenos
Premontessori English Online TASK - I
English
English area
Preschool
Listening
Online Task
Requirements: Parental guidance, computer.
Topic: Beginning sound /S/
Subtopic: Vocabulary that begins with sound S.
Average time: 5 – 10 min
Objectives:
To identify vocabulary that begins with the sound /S/
To listen to the words and repeat them in order to reinforce pronunciation.
Instructions:
1. Click on each illustration to listen to its corresponding word.
2. Once you have heard and repeated all the words, try identifying each button's corresponding word without clicking on it, then click again... did you say the correct word?
If you did it ... Wow... now you know words in English that begin with sound 'S'.Great!
If you did not... Try again, try as many times as you want and need.
We will play this game at school in our English class; let's see how will you do?
Practice listening and saying the words with proper pronunciation.
This will help you win when playing memory game with 'S' vocabulary cards.


Premontessori English Online TASK - I - Windows Internet Explorer proporcionado por Windows uE
Practice listening and saying the words with proper pronunciation.
This will help you win when playing memory game with 'S' vocabulary cards.
Comentarios
AÑADIR NUEVO
Escribir comentario
Marcela
2009-09-22 19:26:09
Ya pue ingresar al vinculo. esta super la tarea. L a practicaremos con Catalina
Mil gracias
Citar

Appendix E

Consent letters

Bogotá, August 31st, 2009

Mr.
Mauricio Lora Aguirre
Curriculum Coordinator
Gimnasio Femenino

This be the occasion to thank you all for the support we have received from you during the first year we have been studying our Masters Course at La Sabana University.

Since it is necessary to carry out a research project to obtain our Masters Degree Certificate in English Language Teaching, we need you to approve our proposal for working with our target population: Premontessori Grade at this prestigious institution. Parents and students will be informed about the project and will also be asked for their

authorization to use their written outcomes, and students themselves in pictures and videos to illustrate the different stages of this study.

Thank you very much in advance,

_____	_____
Dalia Díaz	Mónica Orjuela

English teachers – Premontessori

c.c. Gisela Toro López
Preschool Coordinator
Mónica Perdomo Vega
English Area Head

Bogotá, September 1st, 2009

Dear
Parents – Premontessori 2009-2010
Gimnasio Femenino

This be the ocassion to welcome you to start this journey at school together with your daughter.

Since it is necessary to carry out a research project to obtain our Masters Degree Certificate in English Language Teaching at La Sabana University, we need you to approve our proposal for working vocabulary acquisition with your daughter as a member of our target population: Premontessori Grade at this prestigious institution. Staff of directors was already informed about this project. Therefore, we are asking for your authorization to use your daughter's written outcomes as a source of data collection, as well as pictures and videos, to illustrate the different stages of the project.

Thank you very much in advance,

_____ _____

Dalia Díaz Mónica Orjuela

English teachers - Premontessori

September 1st, 2009

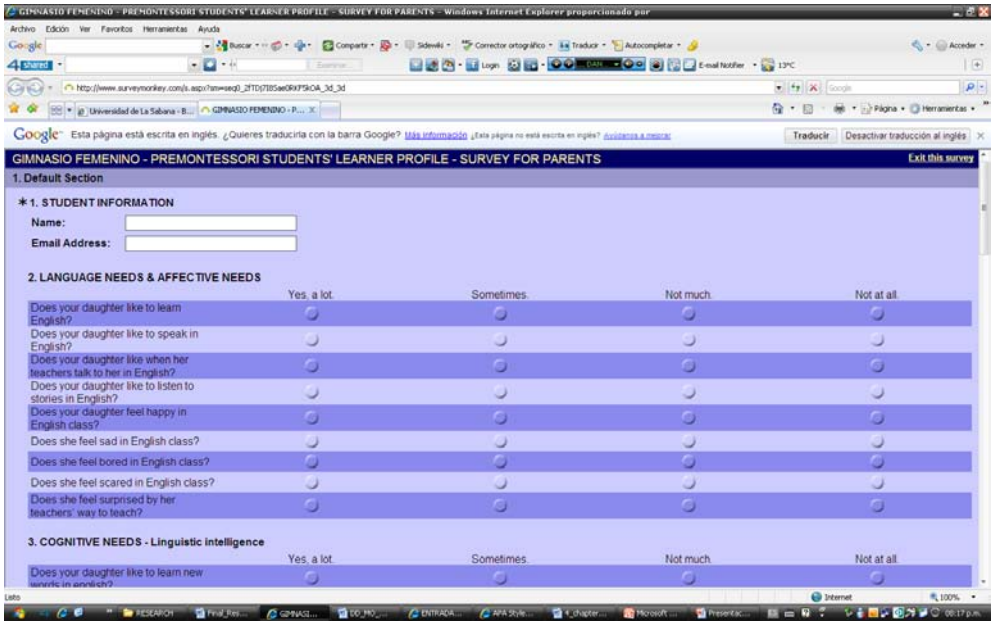
We _____ and _____, parents of _____ of Premontessori _____, authorize English teachers of the level to carry out their research project on "Vocabulary acquisition and usage," with our daughter's outcomes and performance in form of pictures and videos. We also commit ourselves to support our daughter in her take-home activities needed for the study.

_____ _____

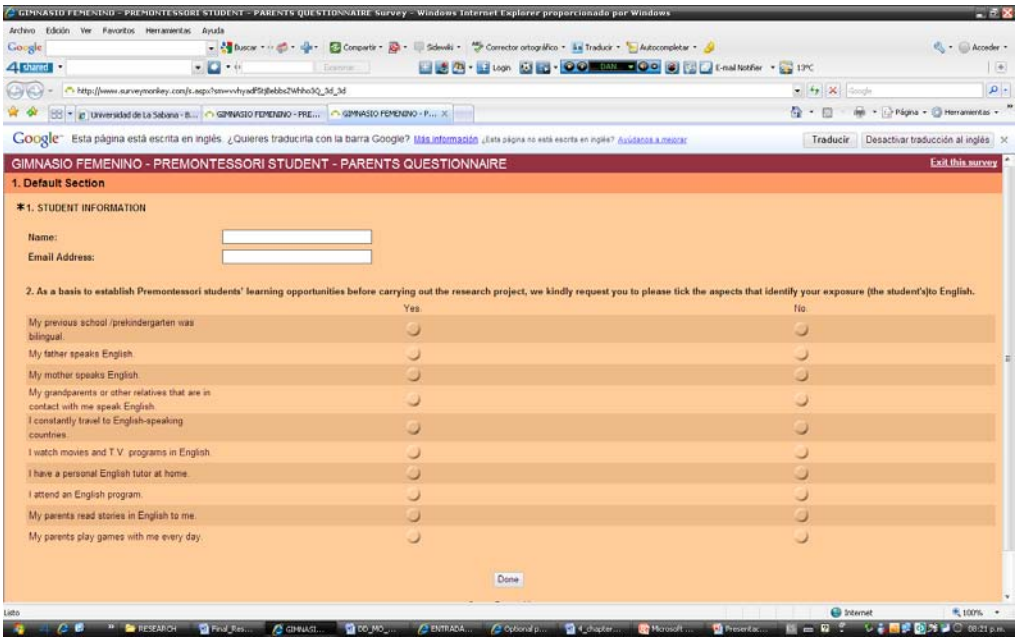
Mother's signature *Father's signature*

Appendix F

Surveys for parents and students



http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=seq0_2fTDj7I8Sae0RKF5kOA_3d_3d



http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=vvhyadf5tjBebbsZWhho3Q_3d_3d

Appendix G

TEACHER MADE PRETEST RESULTS							
Grade	SS	F	S	M	L	D	Percentage of prior knowledge vocabulary
P 01	1	fish					2,9%
	2						0,0%
	3			mouse mother	lion		8,6%
	4						0,0%
	5		sandwich				2,9%
	6						0,0%
	7		school				2,9%
	8						0,0%
	9						0,0%
	10						0,0%
	11		spoon				2,9%
	12	fish	school			dance dog	11,4%
	13						0,0%
	14						0,0%
P 02	1						0,0%
	2		sandwich	mother			5,7%
	3						0,0%
	4						0,0%
	5					duck	2,9%
	6			moon			2,9%
	7			mother		duck	5,7%
	8		sandwich				2,9%
	9						0,0%

Vocabulary Ability Development in Prekindergarten Students

	10				lion		2,9%
	11						0,0%
	12						0,0%
	13						0,0%
	14						0,0%
	15					dinosaur doctor	5,7%
%	1	fork	sun	mouse			8,6%
P 03	2			mother	lion		5,7%
	3		school	mouse		dinosaur duck	11,4%
	4						0,0%
	5			mother			2,9%
	6	frog				duck	5,7%
	7						0,0%
	8	Frog fish	school	mouse		dance duck	14,3%
	9						0,0%
	10						0,0%
	11						0,0%
	12		sandwich			dog	5,7%
	13			mother		dog	5,7%
	14						0,0%
	15		sandwich snaked			dance duck	11,4%

Appendix H

Tally sheet for vocabulary ability assessment and tasks follow-up

Vocabulary Ability Development in Prekindergarten Students

Group	SS	F words		S words				M words				L words					D words					Total % of words acquired
		Practice Memory game	% of words acquired *	practice Memory game	Charades	Online Task	% of words acquired *	practice Memory game	Charades	Online Task	% of words acquired *	practice Memory game	Charades	Online Task	Pictograph	% of words acquired *	practice Memory game	Charades	Online Task	Pictograph	% of words acquired *	
P 01	1	√	85%	√	√	√	71%	√	√	√	100%	±	±	±	×	85%	√	√	√	√	85%	85%
	2	√	85%	√	×	×	85%	×	×	×	85%	±	±	±	×	71%	×	×	×	√	100%	85%
	3	√	85%	√	×	√	85%	√	√	√	100%	±	±	±	×	85%	√	√	√	√	85%	88%
	4	√	71%	√	√	×	57%	√	√	√	85%	√	√	√	×	42%	×	×	×	×	42%	59%
	5	√	71%	√	×	×	71%	×	×	×	71%	×	×	×	×	14%	√	√	×	×	57%	56%
	6	±	57%	±	×	×	57%	×	×	×	14%	±	±	±	×	57%	±	±	±	±	71%	51%
	7	√	57%	√	√	√	71%	√	√	√	100%	√	√	√	×	100%	√	×	√	√	71%	79%
	8	√	71%	√	×	√	85%	×	×	×	85%	±	±	±	×	85%	√	√	√	√	100%	85%
	9	√	71%	√	√	√	100%	√	√	√	42%	±	±	±	×	42%	×	×	×	×	57%	62%
	10	√	100%	√	×	×	57%	×	×	×	85%	×	×	×	×	28%	√	×	×	×	85%	71%
	11	√	85%	√	√	√	85%	√	√	√	100%	√	√	√	×	71%	√	√	√	√	100%	88%
	12	√	71%	√	×	√	85%	√	√	√	28%	√	√	√	×	57%	√	√	√	√	71%	62%
	13	√	71%	√	√	√	100%	×	×	×	85%	±	±	±	×	71%	√	√	√	√	85%	82%
	14	×	42%	√	×	×	14%	×	×	×	14%	×	×	×	×	14%	×	×	×	×	28%	22%
P 02	1	×	0%	×	×	×	42%	√	√	×	71%	×	×	×	×	28%	×	×	×	×	71%	42%
	2	±	85%	√	×	√	28%	×	×	×	85%	×	×	×	×	71%	±	±	±	±	42%	58%
	3	√	71%	×	×	×	14%	×	×	×	14%	√	√	√	×	42%	×	×	×	×	14%	31%
	4	√	0%	√	×	×	28%	√	√	√	71%	√	√	√	±	42%	√	√	√	√	57%	39%
	5	±	85%	√	√	√	100%	±	±	±	100%	√	√	√	√	85%	√	√	√	√	100%	94%
	6	√	71%	√	√	√	71%	√	√	√	100%	√	√	√	×	71%	√	√	√	√	71%	76%
	7	√	100%	√	√	√	100%	√	√	√	100%	√	√	√	√	100%	√	√	√	√	71%	94%
	8	√	85%	√	√	√	42%	√	√	√	100%	√	√	√	×	85%	√	√	√	√	71%	76%
	9	±	85%	√	√	×	71%	√	√	×	42%	√	√	√	×	85%	√	×	×	×	71%	70%
	10	√	85%	√	√	√	85%	√	√	√	100%	√	√	√	√	85%	√	√	√	×	100%	91%
	11	√	85%	×	×	×	71%	×	×	×	0%	×	×	×	×	28%	√	√	√	√	42%	45%
	12	√	85%	√	√	√	57%	√	√	√	100%	√	√	√	×	28%	√	√	√	×	71%	68%
	13	×	85%	√	√	√	71%	×	×	×	71%	×	×	×	×	28%	√	√	√	×	71%	65%
	14	√	85%	√	√	√	71%	√	√	√	57%	±	±	±	×	28%	√	√	√	√	100%	68%
	15	±	85%	×	×	×	85%	×	×	×	85%	×	×	×	×	28%	×	×	×	×	71%	70%
P 03	1	√	42%	√	√	×	57%	√	√	√	71%	√	√	√	√	71%	√	√	√	√	57%	62%
	2	√	71%	√	√	√	57%	√	√	√	71%	√	√	√	√	85%	√	√	√	√	57%	68%
	3	√	100%	√	√	√	71%	√	√	√	71%	√	√	√	√	71%	√	√	√	√	85%	79%
	4	±	57%	√	±	×	71%	√	√	±	71%	√	√	√	±	57%	√	√	√	±	57%	62%
	5	±	57%	√	±	±	71%	√	√	√	57%	√	√	√	±	57%	√	√	√	±	71%	62%

	6	√	100%	√	√	√	71%	√	√	√	57%	√	√	√	√	100%	√	√	√	√	57%	77%
	7	±	71%	√	√	×	85%	√	√	±	42%	√	√	√	√	57%	√	√	√	×	42%	59%
	8	√	100%	√	√	√	100%	√	√	√	57%	√	√	√	√	100%	√	√	√	√	71%	85%
	9	×	42%	√	±	×	14%	√	√	±	42%	√	√	±	×	42%	√	√	±	×	42%	36%
	10	×	42%	√	±	×	71%	√	±	×	42%	√	√	±	×	14%	√	√	±	×	0%	33%
	11	×	28%	√	±	×	42%	√	±	±	0%	√	√	±	×	0%	√	√	±	×	57%	25%
	12	±	57%	√	±	×	71%	√	√	±	85%	√	√	√	±	71%	√	√	±	±	57%	68%
	13	√	100%	√	√	±	85%	√	√	√	57%	√	√	√	√	85%	√	√	√	±	85%	82%
	14	×	42%	√	±	×	57%	√	√	±	57%	√	√	√	√	71%	√	√	√	±	57%	56%
	15	×	57%	√	±	×	71%	√	√	±	57%	√	√	±	±	28%	√	√	±	±	85%	59%

Conventions:
√ Student reported continuous practice; ± Student reported that she practiced sometimes; × Student reported no practice
*Words acquired percentages equivalences (there were 7 words to be acquired per each letter introduced):
7 words - 100%
6 words – 85%
5 words – 71%
4 words – 57%
3 words – 42%
2 words – 28%
1 words – 14%
0 words – 0%

High-flyers range between 76%-100% based on the school's grading system
Average range between 60%-75%
Less successful range between 0%-59%

Appendix I

Tally sheet of students' contributions in the collaborative sentence building task

Grade	SS	F words	% of words acquired * according to Appendix 1 – while implementation	S words	% of words acquired * according to Appendix 1 – while implementation	M words	% of words acquired * according to Appendix 1 – while implementation	L words	% of words acquired * according to Appendix 1 – while implementation	D words	% of words acquired * according to Appendix 1 – while implementation	Total of accurate use of vocabulary acquired
P 01	1	√√	85%	√	71%		100%		85%		85%	3
	2		85%		85%	√	85%		71%	√	100%	2
	3	√√	85%	√	85%	√	100%	√√	85%	√√	85%	8
	4		71%	√	57%		85%		42%		42%	1
	5		71%		71%		71%		14%		57%	0
	6		57%		57%	√	14%	√	57%		71%	2
	7		57%	√	71%	√	100%	√	100%		71%	3
	8	√√	71%	√	85%	√	85%		85%	√	100%	5
	9		71%		100%		42%		42%		57%	0
	10		100%		57%		85%		28%		85%	0
	11		85%		85%	√	100%	√√	71%	√√	100%	5
	12		71%		85%		28%		57%		71%	0
	13		71%	√	100%	√	85%	√	71%		85%	3
	14		42%		14%		14%		14%		28%	0
	1		0%		42%		71%		28%		71%	0
	2		85%		28%	√	85%	√	71%	√	42%	3
	3		71%		14%		14%		42%		14%	0

P 02	4		0%		28%		71%		42%		57%	0
	5	√√	85%	√√	100%	√√	100%	√	85%	√	100%	8
	6		71%		71%		100%		71%	√	71%	1
	7	√	100%		100%	√	100%		100%		71%	2
	8		85%	√√	42%		100%		85%		71%	2
	9		85%		71%		42%	√	85%	√	71%	2
	10	√	85%	√	85%	√	100%		85%	√	100%	4
	11		85%		71%		0%		28%		42%	0
	12		85%		57%	√	100%	√√	28%		71%	3
	13		85%		71%		71%		28%		71%	0
	14	√	85%		71%		57%		28%	√	100%	2
	15		85%	√	85%		85%	√	28%	√	71%	3
P 03	1	√	42%	√	57%	√	71%		71%		57%	3
	2		71%	√	57%	√	71%		85%	√	57%	3
	3	√√	100%	√	71%		71%		71%	√√	85%	5
	4		57%		71%		71%	√	57%	√	57%	2
	5		57%		71%	√	57%		57%	√	71%	2
	6		100%	√	71%	√	57%		100%	√	57%	3
	7		71%	√	85%	√	42%	√	57%	√	42%	4
	8	√√	100%	√	100%	√	57%		100%	√	71%	5
	9		42%		14%	√	42%		42%		42%	1
	10		42%		71%		42%		14%		0%	0
	11		28%		42%		0%		0%		57%	0
	12		57%		71%	√	85%		71%	√√	57%	3
	13		100%	√	85%	√	57%		85%	√	85%	3
	14		42%		57%		57%		71%		57%	0
	15		57%		71%		57%	√√√	28%	√	85%	4

Appendix J

POST-TEST - VOCABULARY NOT ACQUIRED AND ACQUIRED									
Grade	SS	F	S	M	L	D	Total of unlearned words / Total of words taught(35)	Percentage of unacquired vocabulary	Percentage of acquired vocabulary
P 01	1	Feelings	sing		leaf		3	8,6%	**91,4%**
	2	feelings frog	sing slide sun		lamb lamp leaf	doll	9	25,7%	**74,3%**
	3		mittens		ladder lamb leaf		4	11,4%	**88,6%**
	4	food fork frog	sing snake spoon	milk moon	ladder lamb lamp leaf	dinosaur doll	14	40%	**60%**
	5	feelings food fork frog	sandwich school sing slide snake	milk mittens moon mouse	ladder lamp leaf lollipop	desk dog doll duck	21	60%	**40%**
	6	feelings fork food	school sing slide spoon	mittens	ladder lamb leaf	desk	12	34,3%	**65,7%**
	7	fish	sing	mittens	leaf	doll	9	25,7%	**74,3%**

		frog	snake spoon			duck			
	8	feelings fish food fork	sing	milk mittens	lamb leaf lemon lion	doll	12	34,3%	**65,7%**
	9	feelings	sing slide snake	mittens	ladder leaf	desk dinosaur doll	10	28,6%	**71,4%**
	10		sing slide snake	milk mittens	ladder leaf	desk doll	9	25,7%	**74,3%**
	11				ladder leaf	doll	3	8,6%	**91,4%**
	12	Feelings			ladder lamb		3	8,6%	**91,4%**
	13	flowers fork frog	slide		lamb leaf lemon	desk dinosaur	9	25,7%	**74,3%**
	14	feelings flowers fish food fork frog	school sing slide snake spoon sun	milk moon monkey mother mouse	ladder lamb lamp leaf lemon lion	dance desk dinosaur doll doctor	28	80%	**20%**
P 02	1	feelings fork frog food fish	school sing slide	milk mittens moon	ladder lamb leaf	desk doll	16	45,7%	**54,3%**
	2		school sing slide		ladder	doll	5	14,3%	**85,7%**

	3	feelings fish food fork frog	school sing slide sun	milk mittens moon mother mouse	ladder lamb lamp leaf lion	desk dog doll	22	62,9%	**37,1%**
	4	feelings flowers fish food fork frog	school sing slide spoon	mask mittens	ladder lamb lamp leaf lion lollipop	desk dinosaur doll	21	60%	**40%**
	5						0	0%	**10%**
	6				ladder lamb	doll duck	4	11,4%	**88,6%**
	7			mittens	ladder lion	duck	4	11,4%	**88,6%**
	8		slide		lion		2	5,7%	**94,3%**
	9	fork	school sing		ladder	desk doll	6	17,1%	**82,9%**
	10						0	0%	**100%**
	11				ladder		1	2,9%	**97,1%**
	12	fork	sing	milk	ladder lamb	desk doll duck	8	22,9%	**77,1%**
	13	feelings fork	school sing slide		ladder leaf	desk	8	22,9%	**77,1%**
	14	feelings fish fork	sing	milk	ladder lamb leaf		8	22,9%	**77,1%**
	15	Fork	sing		ladder leaf		4	11,4%	**88,6%**

%	1		slide		ladder	desk	3	8,6%	**91,4%**
	2						0	0%	**100%**
P 03	3						0	0%	**100%**
	4	Food	slide		ladder lamb	desk doll	6	17%	**82%**
	5		slide spoon		ladder lamb	desk	5	14%	**85%**
	6						0	0%	**100%**
	7				ladder leaf		2	5,7%	**94,3%**
	8						0	0%	**100%**
	9	feelings	sing slide	mittens	ladder lamb	desk doll	8	22,9%	**77,1%**
	10	feelings	sing slide	mittens	ladder		5	14,3%	**85,7%**
	11	frog	sing slide spoon	milk mittens	ladder leaf	desk doll	10	28,6%	**71,4%**
	12						0	0%	**100%**
	13						0	0%	**100%**
	14		slide				1	2,9%	**97,1%**
	15	fork	spoon slide	mittens		desk	5	14,3%	**85,7%**

High-flyers 76%-100% based on the school's grading system
Average range between 60%-75%
Less successful range between 0%-59%

Appendix K

Parents' information – Project implementation Questionnaire

From the questionnaire that was given to parents on October 23rd, 31 families answered it (70% of the target population) and the following data emerged:

Positive / Negative Feedback about the project from parents

Relevant text – Repeating ideas		Themes	Theoretical Constructs
Positive aspects	Negative aspects		
1. Students involvement It is a good, clear, dynamic, constant, and didactic project. It provides variety of ludic tools. It is a good methodology. It implies learning through games. It makes learning appealing. Everything in the project is positive. It is motivating. It develops students' interest in learning English. The students practice English happily. It stimulates English language use out of the school. It is easy to apply. The project is good, valuable and interesting. It shows interest and commitment towards the students' learning process. It is a fun way to learn.		Project's positive features	
2. Parents & Family involvement It is enjoyable, interesting and a funny way to learn together, for the students and family. It involves family. It is an opportunity to share knowledge in family. It offers the whole family opportunities of practicing	Parents have not been able to participate due to lack of language knowledge. It demands time and availability that some parents do not have due to their jobs.	Project's positive/negative features related to family involvement	Benefits and drawbacks of the project and its implementation.

together to learn English. It involves family to support the learning process. It helps the family to keep track of students' progress and amount of vocabulary learned. It helps parents identify students' strengths and weaknesses. It promotes reflection in parents towards their involvement in the students 'learning process. It is the perfect combination: learning, playing and collaborating in family.			
3. Materials and design It is innovative. It is a well-designed tool. It is creative. It offers creative tools that help store the vocabulary easily.	The vocabulary cards' material is of low quality making them transparent and easy to recognize (for the memory game, especially).	Project's design advantages and disadvantages	
4. Vocabulary learning aspects It helps develop pronunciation and fluency. It helps develop vocabulary ability progressively. Positive advances have been shown within 1 ½ months. Progresses are evident throughout the project implementation. It promotes memory skills development, language development, attention, and learning new concepts. It elicits memorizing, reminding and understanding.	Some of the words are not easy for students to learn.	Vocabulary ability and other language skills development	
5. Values added It develops self-discipline and the quality of being persistent. It develops learning autonomy. It is challenging, it invites and motivates students to achieve goals. It develops self-motivation towards language learning. It helps develop a continuous learning process that requires dedication.	The project demands students' concentration and practice at home, when students may be tired.	Metacognition development	
It causes 'incidental learning' because students learn		Incidental learning	

vocabulary while they play without being aware of it.			
6.Computer based learning It offers different ways to practice English through the computer by developing listening skills and attention. It is useful for the learning process. Online tasks are a good complement for the project. Some students prefer online tasks over the other tasks of the chain.	Online tasks have audio problems and cannot be downloaded easily. Online tasks growing difficulty makes them less accessible. Online tasks' audio is difficult to understand. Online tasks are difficult to navigate. Online tasks growing difficulty makes them less accessible.	Computer Based Learning (CBL) (Brown, Earlam, & Race, 1998) - Advantages and constraints	

Appendix L

Task Chain Practice frequency at home reported by parents and students

Conventions:
√ Parents/Student reported continuous practice;
± Parents/Student reported that practiced sometimes;
× Parents/Student reported no practice;
No symbol – Parents did not respond to the questionnaire.
Parents' Information: Rows colored yellow, blue, green and white.
Students' Information: Rows colored pink.

Grade	SS	F words	S words			M words			L words				D words			
		Practice Memory game	Practice Memory game	Charades	Online Task	Practice Memory game	Charades	Online Task	Practice Memory game	Charades	Online Task	Pictograph	Practice Memory game	Charades	Online Task	Pictograph
P 01	1	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	±	√	√	√	±	√
	1	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	±	±	±	×	√	√	√	√
	2	√	√	√	×	√	±	×	√	±	×	×	√	±	×	×
	2	√	√	×	×	×	×	×	±	±	±	×	×	×	×	√
	3															
	3	√	√	×	√	√	√	√	±	±	±	×	√	√	√	√
	4	±	±	±	√	±	±	√	±	±	√	±	±	±	√	±
	4	√	√	√	×	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	×	×	×	×
	5	±	±	×	×	±	×	×	±	×	×	×	±	×	×	×
	5	√	√	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	√	√	×	×
	6	±	±	±	√	±	±	√	±	±	×	±	±	±	×	±
	6	±	±	×	×	×	×	×	±	±	±	×	±	±	±	±
	7	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	±	√	√	√	±
	7	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	√	×	√	√
	8	±	±	±	√	±	±	±	±	±	√	±	±	±	±	±

	8	√	√	×	√	×	×	×	±	±	±	×	√	√	√	√
	9	√	√	±	√	√	±	√	√	±	√	×	√	±	±	×
	9	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	±	±	±	×	×	×	×	×
	10															
	10	√	√	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	√	×	×	×
	11	√	√	±	√	√	±	√	√	±	√	×	√	±	×	×
	11	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	√	√	√	√
	12	√	√	±	√	√	±	×	√	±	×	√	√	±	×	√
	12	√	√	×	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	√	√	√	√
	13	√	√	±	√	√	±	√	√	±	×	±	√	±	√	±
	13	√	√	√	√	×	×	×	±	±	±	×	√	√	√	√
	14															
	14	×	√	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
P 02	**1**															
	1	×	×	×	×	√	√	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	2	√	√	×	√	√	×	√	√	×	×	×	√	×	√	√
	2	±	√	×	√	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	±	±	±	±
	3															
	3	√	×	×	×	×	×	×	√	√	√	×	×	×	×	×
	4	√	√	√	±	√	√	√	√	√	×	√	√	√	±	√
	4	√	√	×	×	√	√	√	√	√	√	±	√	√	√	√
	5	√	√	±	√	√	±	±	√	±	±	±	√	±	±	±
	5	±	√	√	√	±	±	±	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	6															
	6	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	√	√	√	√
	7	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	±	√
	7	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	8	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	±	±	√	√	√	±
	8	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	√	√	√	√
	9															
	9	±	√	√	×	√	√	×	√	√	√	×	√	×	×	×
	10															

	10	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×
	11	√	√	×	√	√	×	√	√	×	√	×	√	×	×	×
	11	√	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	√	√	√	√
	12	±	±	±	√	±	±	√	±	±	√	±	±	±	√	±
	12	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	√	√	√	×
	13	×	×	×	√	×	×	√	×	×	√	×	×	×	√	×
	13	×	√	√	√	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	√	√	√	×
	14	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	√
	14	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	±	±	±	×	√	√	√	√
	15															
	15	±	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
P 03	**1**	√	√	×	√	√	×	±	√	×	×	×	√	×	×	×
	1	√	√	√	×	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	2	√	√	√	×	√	√	×	√	√	×	√	√	√	√	×
	2	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	3	√	√	√	×	√	√	×	√	√	×	√	√	√	×	√
	3	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	4	±	±	±	√	±	±	√	±	±	±	±	±	±	±	±
	4	±	√	±	×	√	√	±	√	√	√	±	√	√	√	±
	5	±	±	±	√	±	±	√	±	±	√	±	±	±	×	±
	5	±	√	±	±	√	√	√	√	√	√	±	√	√	√	±
	6	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	±	√	√	√	±	√
	6	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	7															
	7	±	√	√	×	√	√	±	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×
	8	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	8	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	9	±	±	±	√	±	±	√	±	±	×	±	±	±	×	±
	9	×	√	±	×	√	√	±	√	√	±	×	√	√	±	×
	10															
	10	×	√	±	×	√	±	×	√	√	±	×	√	√	±	×
	11															

	11	×	√	±	×	√	±	±	√	√	±	×	√	√	±	×
	12															
	12	±	√	±	×	√	√	±	√	√	√	±	√	√	±	±
	13	√	√	×	√	√	×	√	√	×	√	×	√	×	√	×
	13	√	√	√	±	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	±
	14	√	√	×	×	√	×	×	√	×	×	×	√	×	×	×
	14	×	√	±	×	√	√	±	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	±
	15															
	15	×	√	±	×	√	√	±	√	√	±	±	√	√	±	±

Appendix M

Percentages of Tasks continuity chain Frequency practice at home

Weekly Frequency / Task	Memory Game	Charades	Pictograph	Online task Task S	Task M	Task L	Task D
Never	6%	22%	32%	16%	22%	45%	38%
1-2 times	45%	61%	54%	25%	45%	38%	51%
3 times	19%	6%	6%	25%	6%	3%	3%
4 or more times	29%	9%	6%	29%	25%	13%	6%

(The percentages were approximated to the lowest number)

Appendix N

Autonomous behavior

Autonomous weekly practice using vocabulary at home	Students inviting parents	Students invited by parents
Never	16%	6%
1-2 times	32%	35%
3 times	6%	6%
4 or more times	45%	48%

Vocabulary Ability Development in Prekindergarten Students

Appendix O

Post implementation questionnaire

The task chain was part of the third term planning (after the project implementation, but online tasks were not provided). Parents and students were asked about their observations towards such implementation without the online tasks, as well as about the continuity on the practice of the other tasks at home.

Relevant text – repetitive ideas.		Themes	Theoretical Constructs
Positive aspects	Negative aspects		
1.Students' comments Some games were good. Learning while playing is likeable. Playing in the computer is fun. Fun. The method assured acquisition even of the most difficult words. Students become familiar with English vocabulary, enhancing interest and love for this language. Students like playing with the families. Students feel comfortable when using the language.	Some games were not so good. Students are not always in the mood to play, because due to their age, they get tired in the afternoons, after school.	Students' perceptions and responses to the method.	

2. Parents and family involvement Involves the family to learn, share and have a good time. The method lets parents support and follow-up their daughters' learning process while having a plan to share, and enjoying together. The material enhances English learning for parents and other members of the family.	When playing with brother/sister there could be a cause of discussion for winning	Project's positive/negative features related to family involvement.	Project's implementation at home benefits and drawbacks
3. Material & design The way the material (vocabulary cards) is handled, helps students customize it when coloring, cutting, and organizing it.	Vocabulary cards are in black and white.	Project's design and material's advantages and disadvantages.	
4. Vocabulary learning aspects The method allows quick vocabulary learning. Effective and evident vocabulary learning. Words became part of student's every day vocabulary. Students recognize the words in different contexts such as while watching TV, while in the street, and practicing with parents, using phrases or sentences with the vocabulary words.	Vocabulary use in context is not evident at home. The method might confuse students because they are faced to learn vocabulary in English when they do not even know how to command Spanish.	Vocabulary ability and other language skills development.	
5. Values added	Playing the tasks all over again,	Project's positive / negative	

It is a good, entertaining and interesting activity because it helps girls learn the vocabulary. The method enhances frequency, repetition and fosters the usage of different learning strategies at an early age. It gives the girls opportunities to approach games, technology and English learning. Memory is exercised. Good pronunciation is enhanced. Practical. Easy to use. The method includes a competitive component as a different way to learn vocabulary and letters. The method leads students to realize the importance of acquiring the second language. The tasks are simple and easy to use. The method has shown bilingual parents some innovative ways to teach vocabulary to their daughters	every day becomes boring. The clues for playing Charades are not clear for parents. It is difficult to acquire the discipline to play in English. Students depend a 100% on their parents' or adults' support to practice at home.	features.	
6. Computer based learning The online tasks were used. Online tasks complement the practice with vocabulary cards Online task are easy to access and	The online tasks were used but not with the necessary frequency. Sometimes, parents could not access the tasks. Parents lack of time to support the	Computer Based Learning (CBL) (Brown, Earlam, & Race, 1998) – Advantages and constraints.	

use. Online tasks are a didactic way to practice vocabulary. Online tasks enhance habit formation and vocabulary ability when taken as a routine.	practice with online tasks on a regular basis. It is difficult to acquire the habit to practice in the computer due to lack of internet connection. Online tasks' sound was not appropriate at times. Online tasks should be modeled and practiced at school. Sometimes playing at the computer is tiring for students.		

Appendix P

Researchers' Notes

Relevant text – repetitive ideas.	Themes	Theoretical Constructs
At a starting point, it was difficult to get all the students involved. Just some of them got really interested in the method, and especially in one group (P 03), there were serious indiscipline problems that affected the learning environment. Students showed interest towards Memory Game during the first four letters introduced. 18% of the students started to express boredom towards the Memory Game task, when introducing the fifth letter. Students enjoyed coloring and cutting the cards. 15% of the students had trouble cutting the cards appropriately. 45% of the students tended to cover the illustrations when coloring them, making them illegible. Coloring and cutting the cards in class was time consuming. Therefore, we decided to send the vocabulary cards home for students to color and cut them under parents' supervision, leaving class time to assure more practice on the tasks continuity chain. The quality of the material (paper) used to make the vocabulary cards should be revised. Sample vocabulary cards used by the teacher need to be bigger and colorful	Approaches and behaviors while implementing the tasks in class	Project's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities

to be more appealing for the students. Constant supervision of students' tasks development in groups was needed to assure proper vocabulary usage. At the beginning, it was difficult to negotiate Charades mimics in order to play as a whole group and in pairs, making it difficult to play at home as well. Parents who are not bilingual need further explanations in Spanish, whether written or face to face, to assure understanding of instructions and method's procedures. Although using Pictograph is a good strategy to recall vocabulary and reinforce acquisition, it has a constraint because students' fine motor skills development is still in the first stages (only 31% of the first pictographs made at school were understandable, even by the students). However, at the end of the implementation, it was evident that students improved their graphic expression (55% of the last pictographs made at school were clear). Online tasks were not introduced and practiced at school due to lack of time, which seemed to be a constraint for students' further practice at home. They were left to practice with parents, which did not assure real use of them. Collaborative sentence building assured understanding of the usage of vocabulary words in context assisted by L1. Students connected the vocabulary acquired using L1 words to complete their ideas, which were translated to L2 by the teacher, enhancing echoing of the right target language structures. However, when the teacher asked students individually, they were not able to recall the whole sentences on their own, only the words		

learned by filling the gaps left by the teacher when telling the sentences. While checking students' individual vocabulary usage through the sentence telling, popped up the opportunity for the rest of the group to create a sentence individually. This was done by drawing at the back of the collaborative sentence building illustration, using the learned words, assisted by L1. Even though this could have been a great data source to prove students' vocabulary usage in context, there was no time to listen to each of them retelling their own creations. Vocabulary was chosen based on two criteria: Words included in the Harcourt Trophies series, basis of the English curriculum for the level and High frequency words in L1 (e.g. father, mother, milk, mittens, feelings) However, chosen vocabulary must be revised since there were some common words difficult to learn for most of the students. (See Appendix 3). Parents informed to feel overwhelmed because of the amount of information received at the beginning of the schooling process. There was a general sense of parental lack of commitment and involvement in following all the tasks in the chain. Students' constant absences affected their follow-up of the tasks 'procedures, even though the materials and instructions were sent home as soon as they returned to school.		

Appendix Q

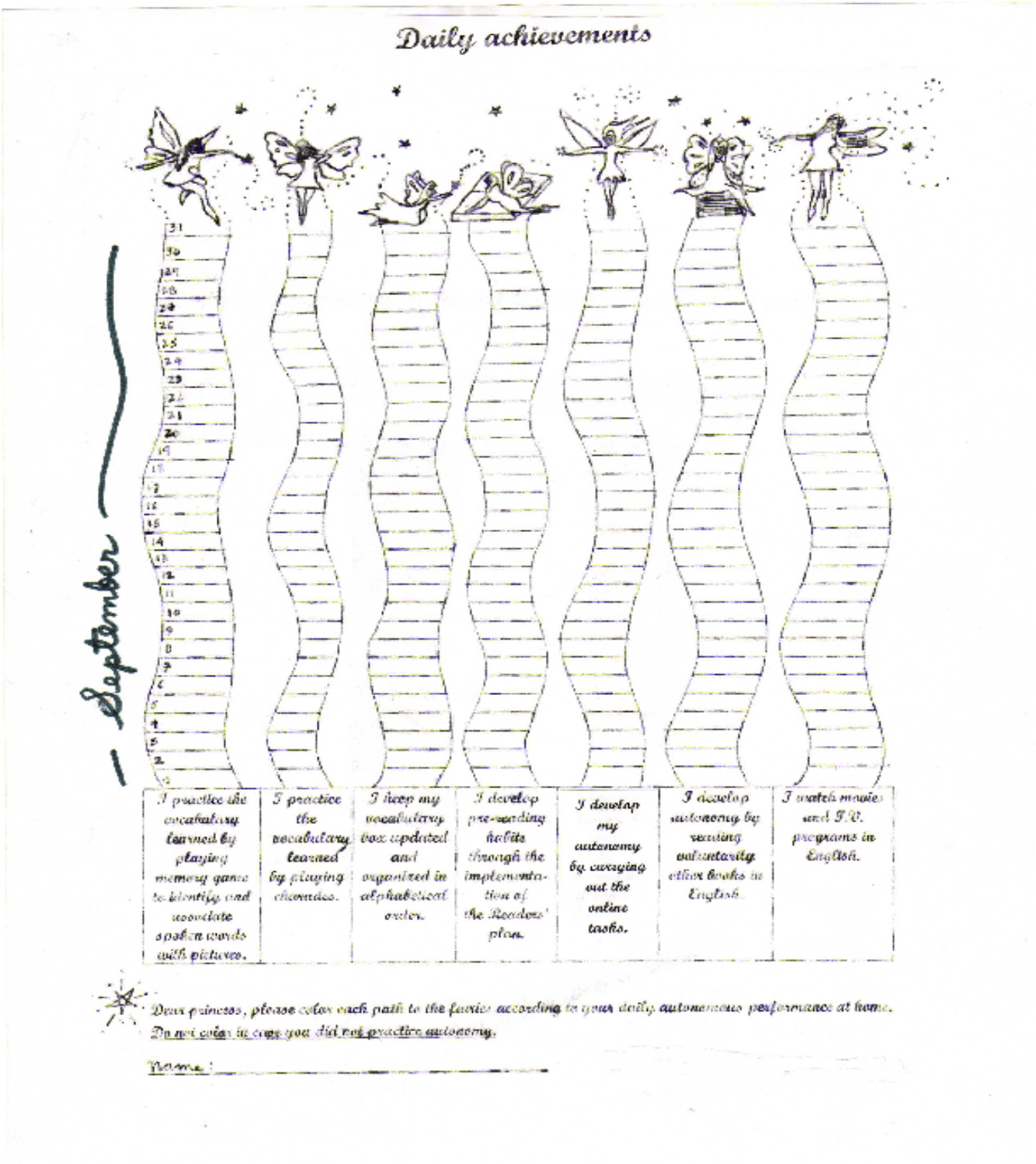
Parents' comments on the school's web page's online tasks.

Relevant text – repetitive ideas.	Themes	Theoretical Constructs
As home work is great" "It is nice and didactic, it helps with pronunciation." "it is a fun and enjoyable activity" It is a good tool, nice to practice with our kids at home, it is creative, we wish all home activities were like that". "it is an excellent method for learning, I like it because the girls educate their hearing and pronunciation each word accurately, moreover, the drawings and music are "motivating". "Good for pronunciation and to create phrases." "Great to reinforce pronunciation and fun" The girl liked it a lot, we will keep practicing" "Very interesting" "It would be good to include whole the vocabulary to be taught" "Good methodology" The whole family played, son, daughter, mom and dad , it is a marvelous way to learn. "We are very grateful for this study method"		

The tasks are well done, easy to understand and even better for the students to use and learn the sounds! Look forward to see more activities! “ Fun activity captivates everyone’s attention” Fun didactic and kindful for learning. Very entertaining. “Excellent for pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition” “Definitively of genius, excellent to develop and polish aural skills and to acquire an excellent pronunciation ,” We have enjoyed it. Fabulous” “Congratulations” Negative Music is too loud interfere pronunciation hearing. Some are difficult		

Appendix R

Autonomy Daily Achievement



APPENDIX S

September 2nd, 2009

Dear parents,

As explained yesterday at the end of the meeting, we are sending you the consent letter (Annex) for you to authorize the Premontessori English teachers to use classes' outcomes such as drawings, photos and videos as part of a Master in English Language Teaching research project.

Queridos padres: Como les fue comunicado al final de la reunión de ayer, estamos enviando la carta (Anexo) para su autorización del uso del material producido por sus hijas en la clase de inglés (Dibujos, fotos y videos) para el proyecto de investigación de Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés que actualmente realizan las profesoras.

It is required that you commit to:

Es requerido su compromiso con:

1. **Want your daughter to learn the English language vocabulary proposed for Premontesssori.**
   Querer que su hija aprenda el vocabulario en inglés propuesto para Premontessori.
2. **Desire that your daughter develops her skills to communicate in English**
   Desear que su hija desarrolle habilidades comunicativas en inglés.
3. **3.1. Guide your daughter -through the use of the games proposed- to be autonomous. Autonomous user of the vocabulary-material, autonomous reader, autonomous in her way to learn at home.**
   Guiar a su hija para que sea autónoma. Autónoma en el uso del vocabulario-material, autónoma en la lectura, autónoma en su manera de aprender y realizar las actividades en casa (tareas).

   3.2. Play with your daughter memory games, charades and Pictionary with the material sent home, to set an affective context in which she actually needs to use the vocabulary that she is learning in order to internalize it. If language is not used it tends to be forgotten.
   Jugar con su hija juegos de memoria, mímica y "pictionary" con el material enviado a casa, para generar un contexto afectivo en el que ella necesite usar el vocabulario que está aprendiendo. (Si el lenguaje no se usa se olvida).

   3.3. Help your daughter to get used to Computer Assisted Learning –technology- by the use of educational links in internet that will be shared with you throughout the year.
   Ayudar a su hija con el uso de material educativo por computador, a través de la implementación de "Links" educativos que serán compartidos con Uds. a través del año escolar.

To start, please, use the following links to respond to two interesting surveys:

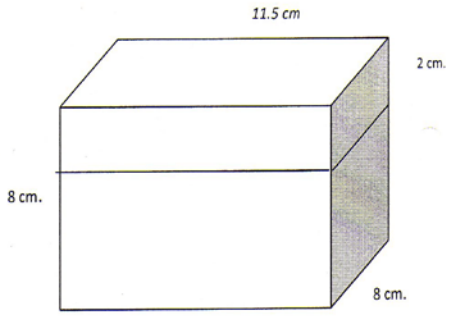
Para iniciar, por favor referirse a los siguientes links en donde encontrarán dos interesantes encuestas:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=seq0_2fTDj7l8Sae0RKF5kOA_3d_3d

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=vvhyadf5tjBebbsZWhho3Q_3d_3d

Note: The vocabulary cards must be kept in a box (figure 1). You can buy it for $4500 at: Autop. Norte No.149-53 Local 201 costado Occidental (frente a estación Transmilenio 146), or you can use any other box that will be nice and comfortable for your daughter in which the cards will be protected and organized. (The box will be used in Montessori and Transition as well)

Nota: el vocabulario (Vocabulary cards) deberá ser mantenido en una caja (figura 1). Se puede mandar a hacer por $4500 en la Autop. Norte No.149-53 Local 201 costado Occidental (frente a estación Transmilenio 146), o se puede usar cualquier otra caja que sea cómoda y atractiva para su hija en la que las tarjetas estén ordenadas y protegidas. (Esta caja será utilizada en Montessori y Transición).



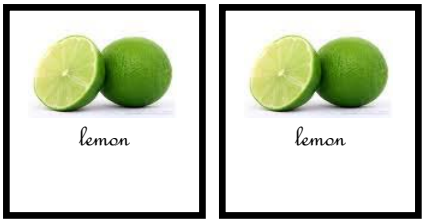
Vocabulary Ability Development in Prekindergarten Students

October 1, 2009

TAKE-HOME TASKS DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Dear Parents: We are sending a format with matching pictures of the new vocabulary your daughter is learning with initial sound /L/.

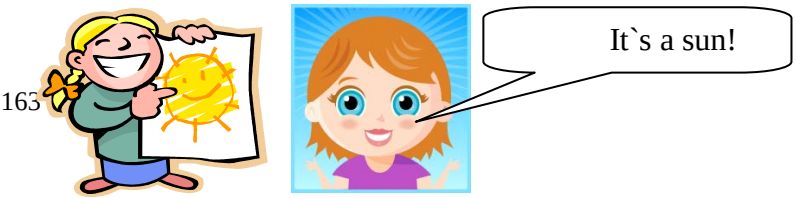
1. Please play "Memory Game" at home, which consists of placing all the vocabulary- cards up-side down (after mixing them), then, choose two of them at a time to discover the pairs, while saying each card`s corresponding word. If a player does not match the pictures or says the wrong words, correct the words and place the word cards up-side down again. **The player must say the name of each picture in order to win** (For example lemon – lemon).



2. Play the new game **"Charades",** which is played with the same vocabulary cards as follows:
   - Each player plays with a set of eight different cards (both players must have all the eight different illustrations).
   - Player 'A' picks a card from player 'B' (without seeing it) and mimics the picked card's word for player 'B' who must guess what the word is...
   - If the answer is right, the player who guesses (in this case player B) gets a point; if the answer is wrong, the card will be returned to its owner (in this case player 'B').
   - Then player 'B' picks a card from player 'A' (without seeing it) and mimics the picked card's word for player 'A' who must guess what the word is... if the answer is right…
   - The game will be finished when all the vocabulary cards have been used. The player with most points wins!

3. Play the the game **"Pictograph"**, which is played with the same vocabulary cards as follows:

- Each player plays with a set of eight different cards (both players must have all the eight different illustrations).
- Player 'A' picks a card from player 'B' (without seeing it) and illustrates/draws the picked card's word for player 'B' who must guess what the word is...
- If the answer is right, the player who guesses (in this case player B) gets a point; if the answer is wrong, the card will be returned to its owner (in this case player 'B').
- Then player 'B' picks a card from player 'A' (without seeing it) and Illustrates/draws picked card's word for player 'A' who must guess what the word is... if the answer is right… (same as above)
- The game will be finished when all the vocabulary cards have been used. The player with most points wins!



4. The "**Online Tasks**" are available at www.gimnasiofemenino.edu.co/portal/prescolar. Please, support your daughter to develop the tasks using technology. Let her explore the task by herself. Remind her to use audio as a model for correct pronunciation.

Have fun everyday!

Thank you in advance for your commitment and support.

English teachers

Note

- **Remember to keep these vocabulary cards in a vocabulary box at home, to play every day…**
- **Remember to fulfill the Autonomy Daily Achievement chart.**

October 13, 2009

Dear Princess:

You have been working collaboratively in class with your classmates creating sentences to finally come up with a short story. ("**Collaborative sentence building task**"). Please, invite your parents to listen to your short "story telling".

Dear parents:

Your daughter has been working collaboratively in class with her classmates creating sentences to finally come up with a short story. ("**Collaborative sentence building task**"). Please, invite her to share it with you at home.