

ENGLISH ALTERNATIVE STUDY PROGRAMME
2ND GRADE



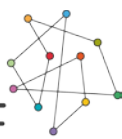
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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INTRODUCTION

English language learning is fundamental in the Chilean curriculum. It allows students to access different areas of knowledge and it is praised to be the *lingua franca* of the world. A wide variety of media, technology and information can be accessed by mastering the English language, which is also a way to learn about other cultures.

As part of the globalized world, English learning is of major importance due to the varied scenarios in which this language could be used, such as the scientific, economic, technological and academic areas. Therefore, mastering this language is a way in which students can benefit from the possibilities that globalization may bring.

The main four skills of the language (reading, writing, speaking and listening), students will allow students to communicate fluently with others both orally and in written form. Through these skills students will be able to expand their general knowledge by learning about other cultures, traditions customs and beliefs.

Since English is not used amongst citizens on a daily basis in Chile, it is taught as a foreign language (EFL). This implies that students, apart from the English lessons at school, have few or no opportunities to practice the language. Therefore, teaching English since the early years of elementary education allows students to be more exposed to the language and due to their youth, learn it in a much more natural way through games, songs and rhymes.

1. LANGUAGE LEARNING

The concept *young learner* defines a student between five to twelve years of age approximately. At these ages, students are highly motivated when it comes to acquiring new knowledge. They are enthusiastic, get easily involved in new tasks, love challenges and are completely open to new learning experiences. In order to teach successfully in these year levels, varied strategies must be used. Likewise, teachers must be not only fluent in the language but also skilful and intuitive when it comes to understanding how students acquire new knowledge and interact with the world that surrounds them.

Some learning theories that refer to the process of teaching and learning a language are meaningful in this context:

- According to Piaget, children can give meaning to the world by constantly interacting with their immediate surroundings. Learning occurs when students perform actions to solve everyday problems which makes them construct meaning through experimentation and through trial and error. This allows them to discover new knowledge and the way things work. Classroom environment must provide opportunities for students to learn through activities, problem solving and by working with real, concrete objects.
- Vygotsky states that cognitive development and learning occur in a social context by interacting with both peers and adults to build new knowledge as opposed to children working on their own. Children are active learners in a world full of adults whose role is to help children learn through stories, conversations, questions, and games. In these interactions, language can be fundamental as a way of verbalizing and organizing words and symbols.
- Bruner believes that language is one of the most important tools for cognitive development. Adults use language to act as mediators of the world that children are exposed to. Scaffolding of students' knowledge through daily routines is an essential role of the teacher and it enables students to solve problems which are beyond their skills and knowledge. In this way students can actively give meaning to new language by participating of everyday situations.

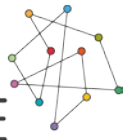
Brown (2007) states that young learners need:

- Intellectual development: At this stage of life students are concrete and can learn those aspects of language that are immediate and functional as opposed to abstract explanations from the teacher which cannot be remembered. Therefore, teaching grammatical rules and terminology must be avoided.
- Attention Span: Children can stay focused for longer periods of time if they are exposed to activities which they consider to be interesting, challenging and fun. They must also immediately capture students' attention, be varied and awaken their curiosity. Hence, they must be presented to the class by an enthusiastic teacher with a developed sense of humour.
- Stimulating the five senses: Apart from the visual and aural stimulus, students must be exposed to other activities that stimulate the other senses as well. Lessons must incorporate movement, role play and games. Manual activities or projects help children internalize language in a spontaneous and natural way.
- Emotions and feelings: At this stage students have inhibitions and are also sensitive to the opinion of their peers when speaking the language. Teachers must create an environment of respect and trust and help students be confident enough to overcome new challenges. Continuous oral participation must always be encouraged in the class, especially among quieter students.
- Use of authentic, meaningful language: Young students are concrete and learn the context from their immediate surroundings. Meaningful use of the language in well-known everyday situations help students focus their attention and remember the language. A whole language approach which interrelates the four skills must be always encouraged.

When learning a language, students are highly motivated during childhood, but this motivation decreases as they get older. A cause for this is the lack of interaction between students as they get older which does not allow them to display/show what they have learnt. This, together with the lack of support they have at home and the lack of importance that schools give to English as a subject, affects learning considerably.

Curtain and Dahlberg (2010) refer to key methodologies that are essential when teaching a language to young learners:

- Children must actively build meaning through the use of language instead of them being passive receivers of vocabulary and information.
- Children must constantly use the English language with a minimum use of the mother tongue.
- Units must be thematically planned and must include all the elements of the language with are taught in a balanced way.
- Classroom management skills and a good learning environment must be considered in all lesson plans.
- Teachers must support and guide students so that they become more independent in the production of the language.



- Meaningful and motivating communicative contexts must be encouraged in the class by means of games, songs, routines, celebrations and role plays in which grammar supports the teaching of language but is not the centre of the lesson.
- The class must provide experiences that make children be aware of the existence of other cultures.
- Lesson plans must have clear steps to follow and promote a motivating, caring and safe environment.
- Students' learning is constantly and regularly assessed to check progress.
- Lesson plans must include activities which:
 - Are motivating, interesting and challenging.
 - Consider the new learning challenges according to students' age
 - Provide frequent opportunities for language use.
 - Include concrete experiences through realia and handcrafts, among others.
 - Consider different learning styles.
 - Include tasks that involve physical activity and frequent movement.
 - Create opportunities in which students can develop language learning strategies so that they can become more independent.

2. FOCUSES

English teaching uses the communicative focus. The Chilean curriculum has been developed based on the methodological strategies used by this focus. The main aim is to communicate through the integrated use of the four main skills of the language.

The communicative focus refers to some principles that must be considered when teaching a language. These are: the way in which that language is learnt, the type of activities that enable this learning and the roles both the teacher and the students in the class have. These principles are flexible and can be adapted according to the teaching context, the age of the students, and the objectives of the class, among others.

The communicative focus aims to strengthen oral and written expression in a contextualized framework and through the use and practice of the four skills. The objectives of the class must include all the components of the language (vocabulary, topics, grammar, strategies, functions, etc.) and the main aim is for students to use the language to interact with each other and communicate relevant messages. Under this focus, grammar is not the centre of language teaching anymore and it is just one of the elements that facilitate communication. Grammar must be taught in a contextualized way through topics that are attractive and relevant to students and motivate them to communicate their ideas. Through the communicative focus, meaning can be negotiated to support comprehension, and error correction becomes an opportunity to learn.

Peer work, role play, problem solving and collaboration in group projects are encouraged in order for students to communicate, interact, negotiate meaning and exchange information in relevant real-life situations. All these activities change the traditional roles of teachers and students. The teacher becomes someone who enables language use and monitors the development of the lesson and students become active communicators who reflect about their own learning.

Other focuses compliment the communicative focus of the curriculum, emphasizing:

- Meaningful comprehension and communication through vocabulary and the use of realia to support them. According to the Natural Approach, language is a means to communicate ideas and meanings. Thus, students must be exposed to a wide variety of oral and written texts about interesting and motivating topics.
- The interactive nature of the language and the importance of incorporating peer or group activities which encourage an active role of students in their learning process through communication, support and motivation among peers. According to the Cooperative Language Learning theory students develop communicative skills by participating in diverse interactive situations in which communication is the main aim. Through interaction, students support each other to achieve the objectives of the class which becomes an adequate learning atmosphere for language learning, leaving anxiety and prejudice behind and favouring students' self-confidence.
- Language to communicate and receive interesting and relevant information as opposed to language being an object of study in itself. The Content-Based Instruction emphasises that language can be learnt successfully only if it is presented in a meaningful and contextualized way through topics that motivate students and that are connected to their own experience and interests and with other subjects as well.

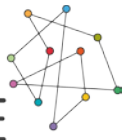
- Class activities that favour language use in meaningful, contextualized situations which are interesting to students allow for language to be learnt easily and successfully. The Task-Based Language Teaching theory states that meaningful tasks which have a clear objective are essential when teaching a language. Communication occurs among students through the comprehension, interaction or production of the language in situations where the main aim is the construction of meaning rather than the study of the forms of the language.
- Physical activity in a stress-free environment encourage and enable language learning in children. The Total Physical Response (TPR) method is based on observing how children learn their first language. In the initial stages, learning is achieved by being exposed to oral language through listening comprehension activities. Children will be exposed to the oral language mainly through commands to which they will react. Physical activity also helps to learn and remember the language and encourage a fun, playful and stress-free environment through games, songs and role plays. According to this theory, oral production occurs when children feel safe and capable of speaking because they have internalized enough vocabulary and structures. The construction of meaning is crucial as opposed to the analysis of the parts of speech and error correction is minimal in order not to inhibit students and favour fluency.

3. LANGUAGE SKILLS

The English alternative programme revolves around the main four communicative skills which are:

- **Listening:** It consists on listening to the language and identifying the sounds in order to understand information with the help of the context and students' own world knowledge. From 1st to 5th grade this skill can be exercised through songs, rhymes, poems, stories and dialogues in a fluent and spontaneous way.
- **Reading:** Meaning can be constructed through written information contained in varied literary and non-literary texts and the readers' previous knowledge.
- **Speaking:** It is a productive skill of the language which implies using English to communicate ideas orally.
- **Writing:** It is also a productive skill of the language in which students express their ideas in simple and contextualized situations which are relevant to them and have a defined purpose.

These four skills must not be developed in isolation but in an integrated manner because understanding information and responding to it are naturally interrelated. For example, in a reading comprehension lesson the teacher will begin with oral questions about the topic to stimulate previous knowledge. This implies that students will listen to the language (listening) and will then respond to the teacher's questions (speaking). Then they will read a text in English (reading) and will answer questions or perform another task in written form to show their comprehension (writing). Consequently, the teacher's role will be to constantly and intentionally combine the four skills.



4. ATTITUDES

The English alternative programme incorporates a series of attitudes which are associated to specific learning outcomes and are based on the *Hidden Curriculum*. The teaching of language must incorporate these attitudes with the content and skills and none of these must be taught separately.

The attitudes to be taught in the English class are the following:

- To value one's own reality and context while learning new aspects of the immediate surroundings.
This can be achieved by making students be actively involved in the reading and listening comprehension of texts. By understanding the topics of these texts, students express their opinions and connect them with their interests and experience. English, then, is a way of learning about other realities and ways of life and value one's own culture and reality.
- To be self-confident about one's own ability to learn a new language. If this is achieved students become motivated and less self-conscious when speaking English.
- To be curious and respectful toward other cultures by valuing their ways of life and their contributions to society.
- To work cooperatively with classmates to reach the learning outcomes. Activities and tasks that favour interaction must be encouraged. Through role play, games and songs students will do group and peer work while respecting turns and different learning styles and rhythms.

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

LISTENING

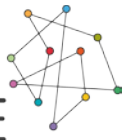
1. Understand texts read by an adult or in audiovisual format, brief and simple, such as:
 - rhymes and *chants*
 - songs
 - stories
 - dialogues
2. Understand oral texts related to known topics or other subjects, that contain the following functions:
 - follow and give instructions
 - introduce yourself and introduce others
 - express ability, feelings, possession and amounts up to 20
 - describe animals and objects in one place
 - describe actions that occur at the moment of speaking
 - request and give information about occupations, food and location of people and objects
3. Demonstrate an understanding of oral texts by:
 - identify characters, objects and animals
 - follow simple instructions
 - identify words, frequently used expressions and learned vocabulary
 - identify English sounds that may interfere with comprehension, such as: / s / - / z / , / w / - / th /
4. Listen to oral texts and applying strategies to support comprehension, for example:
 - make predictions
 - make connections with prior knowledge
 - relate the text with images
 - Focus on keywords
5. React to what has been heard by establishing relationships with personal experiences and / or expressing preferences, feelings or opinions, through:
 - drawings and representations (figures)
 - mimics and actions
 - dramatizations
 - written words or phrases

READING

6. Read and demonstrate comprehension of texts such as stories, rhymes, *chants*, greeting cards, instructions and informative texts, identifying
 - general ideas of the text
 - characters and actions
 - learned vocabulary, familiar words and frequently used expressions (*I want..; Here!*)
7. Read and demonstrate comprehension of texts related to familiar topics or other subjects which include the following functions:
 - follow and give instructions
 - introduce oneself and introduce others
 - express ability, feelings, possession and amounts up to 20
 - describe animals and objects in one place
 - describe actions that occur at the moment of speaking
 - request and give information about occupations, food and location of people and objects
8. Read and apply strategies to support understanding, for example:
 - make predictions
 - establish relationships with previous knowledge
 - relate the text with the images that accompany it
 - reread or read to others out loud, draw or recount with help
9. React to what has been read by establishing relationships with personal experiences and / or expressing preferences, feelings or opinions, through
 - illustrations and representations (figures)
 - dramatizations
 - written words or phrases

SPEAKING

10. Repeat *chants*, rhymes and very brief and simple dialogues to familiarize with the sounds of English and to particularly identify the sounds / s / - / z /, / w /, / th /
11. Participate in dialogues, class interactions and very brief and simple presentations, about familiar topics or other subjects
 - use the support of teachers and objects, gestures and images printed or in digital format
 - use learned vocabulary and frequently used expressions (For example: *How do you say ...? I'm ...*)



12. Express themselves orally with the teacher's support to:
- share personal information, for example: *I'm ...; this is Pedro; I'm cold / happy / hungry; He / she is sad / sleepy*
 - express possession and quantities up to 20, for example: *I have a / an apple; twelve chairs*
 - identify and describe animals, food, occupations and places, for example: *kitchen / hospital / apple; This is a ...; It's big and brown; They are vets; There is a lamp; there are pears*
 - express prohibition, for example: *don't jump*
 - request and give information about food and location of objects, for example: *I want ...; It's cold / hot; Where is the lamp? in / on / under / here / there*
 - describe actions that occur at the moment of speaking: *He is sleeping / playing*

WRITING

13. Write (for example: copy or complete) words and simple sentences according to a model, about familiar topics or other subjects.
14. Write, according to images, in order to:
- identify animals, actions, objects and parts of the house, occupations, places, food, for example: *parrot, lamp; a lion / toy / nurse / hospital; It's a...; They are vets*
 - express feelings, for example: *I'm cold / sad*
 - express quantities in numbers up to 20
 - add information, for example: *I run and jump*
 - describe the location of objects and actions that occur when speaking, for example: *in / on / under ...; is / are sleeping*

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