

I. ARTinED Background Report On Using Literature To Teach Curricular Subjects



Introduction

Humans have been debated if art is a source of knowledge for almost as long as we have been debating and certainly for as long as we have known what art is. During the 1960s, 1970s and the 1980s the analytic philosophy of art has not given importance to the value of art and in 1968 Roland Barthes (Barthes, 1968 pp. 142-8.) concluded that the artist (or author) was, quite simply, 'dead'. The Barthes' essay has influenced French philosophers as Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault and Barthes' work shares much in common with the Yale School of deconstruction in the literary theories. In the recent aesthetics the re-emergence of what makes art valuable and what are the grounds of such values has brought to re-consider the values of art: how art reflects our societies, how art can also serve to lead a society into new ways of thinking and being and how through the art is possible to empower each individual to actualize their creativity and critical thinking skills that are necessary for developing potential paths for our future.

In recent times many countries in the world are seeking how to integrate and promote art and creativity into the everyday life because art and creativity are considered the new economy levers. Their impact and effect on economic development are valued as a vital contribution for economic growth, tourism development, population policy, cultural capital of citizens. The children as future citizens should gain those skills that will enable them to develop and improve problem solving and decision taking attitudes, "and more over these skills will open the psychological and intellectual horizons towards new prospective of personal and collective happiness" (From a conversation with Prof. Julio Monteiro Martins). To develop these skills is necessary to offer the children the possibilities to create and be creative, to develop moral, imaginative, emotional and intellectual capacities and values. For all these reasons art and creativity have gained much attention from scholars and governments and at the same time also organizations like UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) are promoting a more integrated role of art and creativity within the primary and secondary school educational system.

The use of arts in education is considered by UNESCO "a tool for equipping students with knowledge and skills across the curriculum to stimulate cognitive development and to encourage innovative and creative thinking, inventiveness and critical" and at the same time "the art in education approach is often explained using the concept of "multiple intelligences", reflecting the belief that there are many kinds of intelligence and a number of ways of learning". "It is also worth mentioning that arts in education are recognized as a mean of achieving one of UNESCO's central



educational goals: quality education by motivating students to take an active participation in class. To use art at school to support all learning areas (subject areas) will strengthen also the role of education in the multicultural society because art gives value to the diversity of culture as common heritage of humanity: “Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations” (UNESCO, 2001 art.1.)

“In general education and in particularly primary school classes an interdisciplinary teaching approach that uses the arts will lead to give greater importance to the teaching of universal process of inventiveness and creativity and to emphasize the trans disciplinary lessons of disciplinary learning. There is a need for an education that trains the mind to imagine creatively and that uses inter disciplinarity and trans disciplinarity to give special importance to transverse themes. A commitment to build “future citizenry necessarily calls for educational practice that comes to grips with the understanding of social realities, the rights and responsibilities of both individuals and the group, and the reaffirming of political participation” (UNESCO 2003, p14). “Proposing complexity as a quality of reality and as a prospective inseparable from human perception art works as an efficient antidote against homologation of thought, liberating conditioned minds from the flatness of publicity, violence, pornography, stereotypes and political propaganda” (From a conversation with Prof. Julio Monteiro Martins). And it is especially in primary schools when children are in contact for the first time in their lives with objective ways of thinking and universal point of view that the teachers using different forms of art for teaching curricular subjects will support children’s opportunity to grow and develop their intelligences exploring all aspects of the world as a whole linked to creativity, pleasure and enjoyment.

Literature

“Literature is the ability to recreate with words- written or oral- the imaginary world. Therefore it is always a subjective interpretation of life through language.

In ARTinED methodology we will refer to the literature production considering poetry and prose where poetic texts are those ones with multiple connotative signs and prose texts with a more denotative meaning (From a conversation with Prof. Julio Monteiro Martins). The ARTinED methodology will use poems and prose texts to provide examples to the teachers to support the teaching of different curriculum subjects. However the teachers following the ARTinED methodology should feel free to propose his/her own choices of poems and prose texts to the class.

While the prose is committed to a less symbolic and pure realistic approach to reality, in a more denotative meaning, the poetry offers multiple possibilities of meanings, in other words multiple connotative signs and separately the texts written in verse and rhyme (poetry) from texts written in prose (prose).

Creativity writing

Creativity writing is considered by some academics (mostly in the USA) to be an extension of the [English](#) discipline, even though it is taught around the world in many languages and in her work, [Foundations of Creativity](#), [Mary Lee Marksberry](#) references [Paul Witty](#) and [Lou La Brant's Teaching the People's Language](#) and she notes: “Witty and La Brants.....[say creative writing] is a composition of any type of writing at any time primarily in the service of the need for free individual expression which contributes to mental and physical health.” (Marksberry, 1963 p.39).

In ARTinED the teachers will use creativity writing exercises to develop children’s communication and cognitive skills using poetry and prose texts. The leading idea is that a “visiting artist or a permanent artist related to the institution (school) will be present in the class and in direct contact-intellectually and emotionally- with the children. He /she should be able to communicate not only the technique of writing and the narrative strategies but also the joy of the creative act.” (From a conversation with Prof. Julio Monteiro Martins) Oral and written competences, narrative skills and vocabulary will be improved to facilitate the students to explain better their ideas and to communicate thoughts, emotions, vision and deepest feelings. While working on sentence structure, punctuation, grammar the students’ ability to communicate their feeling and express their inner emotion will be enhanced. The process of writing should be enjoyable and it will sooner come to the result (the creative product).

Poetry

The Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) in *Principj di una scienza nuova d' intorno alla comune natura delle nazioni* wrote “that poetry is the first creation of human beings” and that “poetic wisdom based on sense of perception was the first wisdom, the first language of man, through which he creates his world.” (Vico, 1744 p.155).

The great philosopher felt clearly that poetry as art is a primordial instinct and that art represents an essential moment of life, essential as human language itself and a source of knowledge, Benedetto Croce in his comments to Vico’s philosophy wrote:” L'uomo prima di articolare, canta; prima di parlare in prosa, parla in verso; prima di adoperare termini tecnici, metaforeggia.” (Croce,1965 pp. 51-52).

From the very early age poetry accompanies or is central to children’s playful interactions with adults and other children through nursery rhymes, songs, jingles, word play, and riddles. The practice of poetry in the primary school can be done firstly by reading written poems and secondly by promoting children to express themselves and their feelings in a creative way. “To learn and experience poetry in the ordinary life will also open the sensibility to the symbolic and metaphoric world, will promote contamination of the natural world with the strength of imagination”. (From a conversation with Prof. Julio Monteiro Martins). Moreover through poetry can be fostered children's sense of beauty, enjoyment of language and awakened children aesthetic response Hearing and reading poetry should be an intrinsic element of children language experience and a source of joy and fulfillment governed by the “principle of pleasure”. Using poetry teachers can also use creative ways to teach phonics that equip young students with decoding skills. There are some activities that can contribute to the development of the phonic ability: “hearing rhymes and rhymed stories, reproducing rhymes, clapping and dancing to syllabic rhythms, segmenting of sentences into individual words, segmenting of words into syllables, matching the length of a word to its utterance. It is recognized that students who learn phonics at a young age become better spellers and speak with a larger vocabulary, allowing them to tackle more advanced skills such as interpreting and understanding reading materials”. It is widely recognized that phonemic awareness is an important skill in learning to read and that it can be also a very useful tools for the second language teachers.

More reading on phonemic awareness

<http://www.paec.org/itrk3/files/pdfs/readingpdfs/cooltoolsall.pdf>

<http://www.tacoma.k12.wa.us/schools/curriculum/subjects/literacy/elementaryliteracy/ELI/12-PH-PHONICS-SA.pdf>

Poetry will also enhance the children's ability to visualize and gain a deeper understanding of the written content that can be an interesting tool for the teachers to work on vocabulary, grammar, spelling, etc. The practice of writing poetry is a projection and affirmation of the self and for this reason it is extremely motivating.

The approach:

Reading poetry to children can be done and presented in different ways: children can listen to another child reading a text or the teacher can read it aloud, the latter is the most frequently used. In ARTinED Children will listen to an artist reading in presence poetry because listening poetry with the participation of a person as a poet or a storyteller or a singer is more effective for the children. The approach of learning should be based on playing and this will facilitate also the acquisition of the mechanism of poetic language and the ability to memorize. Very simple and funny exercises can be done to recognize and then use some of the simplest literary devices (alliteration, metaphor, simile, onomatopoeia etc). The idea is to capture children's interest through play and pleasure and then bring the children in a magic world where they can play and enjoy the magic rhythm of the poetic texts and learn to compose by their own. The teacher has an important role in initiating, encouraging, guiding and prompting it. To better develop a general more tolerant atmosphere in the class it is suggested to organize this activity as a group activity and ask the children to sit in circle or in small groups on the floor; doing that the children will be enabled to assume a more comfortable position and to follow freely the rhythm of the text with their body.

Writing poetic texts should form part of the child's writing experience. It is an opportunity for stimulating in children the taste of beauty. Poetry more than any other form of language has to do with a very special use of words, their meanings and connotations and it is very useful for knowing a multitude of subjects from new points of view. It is better to start this writing activity as a group activity using the co-writing system to support interaction in writing. Teacher's assistance should be discrete but she/he should encourage children to explore feelings through writing verses because poetry provides a safe, creative way to describe personal emotion. When a group of children are asked to write about a specific emotion they might find they aren't alone in their feelings and this will create a sense of belonging to the group and this fact will also strengthen their personality, their self-esteem and the end of the path of their self expression.

How a poetic text can help children to image and visualize the information to be learned

1. Poetry brings a human element and personal touch to topics. This helps students to form strong visual images that facilitate their remembering information. A collection of poems for history, geography, science, and math is the first step to bringing a human element and a personal touch to the topics that teachers are developing. This helps students retain information and vocabulary and forge remembering connections.
2. Poetry provides powerful messages that breathe life into facts and concepts that students might otherwise find to be uninteresting. Poetry in fact is short and cut to the heart of a topic and connects children to content topic in powerful and memorable ways. Then as students learn more about the topics, they link new information to their own life's experiences and this correlation become important to support the individual's perception of "self".
3. Poetry allows students to explore the issues that relate to the topic. Students can form new insights about the content that are relevant not only to their lives but to their communities and the world. They can create new understandings and develop social and community responsibility.

How to choose the text:

The selection of poetry should be of the highest quality and the texts that are chosen should develop children sense of taste and foster the conviction that poetry is a great source of pleasure. The content of the text should touch areas of children's experience and engage their imaginations, texts suitable for class and group recitation should be preferred. To promote choral reading it is better to start with humorous poems that rhyme. The humour will hook students and the rhythm of the rhyme will help for a choral reading. Children should, of course, be encouraged to select and suggest the poems, lyrics themselves that will be read and discussed in the class however the artist with the class teacher will guide the choice of the subject for the use of whole-class or of the group. It is worth to suggest to the teachers when they propose a text to keep in mind the words of Professor Arnold Weinstein from Harvard University in his lectures about Understanding Literacy, and Life: Drama, Poetry and Narrative. Prof. Weinstein writes that "poetry is the most elegant game ever invented" ... and " that the touch stone of poetry is that there is magic in everyday life" (Weinstein, 1995 p 3)

Prose

The term prose considers the whole literary production that is not in the form of verse such as novel, [essays](#), [short stories](#), fable, [fiction](#), [folk tale](#), legend, [myth](#), [narrative](#), [saga](#), [science fiction](#), [story](#), [theme](#), [tragedy](#) and oral tradition. “While the prose is committed to a less symbolic and pure realistic approach to reality, in a more denotative meaning, the poetry offers multiple possibilities of meanings, in other words multiple connotative signs” (From a conversation with Prof. Julio Monteiro Martins). In primary schools the use of texts in prose is essential for the development of children’s personality, affective, emotional and intellectual growing and for the understanding of the society. The practice of reading and writing in prose can enhance also children’s emotional development, their creativity and imagination and of course their skills in reading and writing. The enjoyment and the aesthetic dimension should also taken into consideration when practicing with children. Because the prose to be efficient needs well structured cause-effect logics, its exercise is capable to improve the logical awareness of the children

The approach

Reading prose texts shall have as objective to support children understanding and responding to the texts, and develop their reading skills. The visiting artist and the class teacher should introduce and encourage the children to see books and reading materials as exciting, pleasurable and interesting.

Special attention during the first year in primary school should be given to offer the children a rich experience of oral language activity, including rhymes, riddles and games designed to develop their phonological and phonemic awareness. This means that oral languages activities play a crucial role in preparing the child to read. Later on in order to become a competent reader the child has to become proficient in recognizing and identifying words. Fundamental to the expansion of children’s world of words and understanding will be the visiting artist’s and teacher’s skill in questioning. All children need frequent exposure to ‘open’ questions that allows and encourages deduction, speculation, prediction, intuition, evaluation and development of their analytical thinking. Teachers can asks questions such as: does that seem right?, How can you be sure?, What word would make sense here?, What word would look right here?, What does the picture tell you?, What do you think the story is going to be about? Children need plenty of experience in tackling these kinds of questions orally before they can successfully attempt written answers.

The ultimate objective of reading is the comprehension or the reconstruction of meaning; to achieve this objective children will need a consistent and structured experience of questioning, discussing and probing the text in order to arrive at its full meaning. The teacher's role in comprehension will involve planning appropriate contexts that will encourage children to reflect while reading. It will involve enabling and stimulating the children, and developing and improving the quality of reflection through modeling, instruction and application. In approaching text and in learning to use comprehension skills, children should experience a balance of appropriate activities including listening tasks, oral response, purposeful reading.

Writing texts in prose will enable the students to elaborate an idea or an event and the latter can be real or invented. In both the cases the result is that the children will learn core curriculum concepts and they will improve writing skills defining characters, setting and plot. To this end the teacher will use creativity writing exercises to help the children to understand how a story/plot is constructed and how all the parts of the story work together. She can start as in a game to talk about Aristotle who in the Poetics provides the simplest possible analysis of plot: "A whole is that which has a beginning, middle, and an end." (Aristotle, 335 BCE) and ask the children "Try this riddle: what is the "whole"? Then once the children have guessed the right answer the teacher will introduce a graphic showing how all the parts of a story work together and will give the basic information about the elements for the creation of a story with special attention to the creation of the [characters](#) (protagonist and antagonist).

Starting from the characters then the [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plot_\(narrative\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plot_(narrative)) plot and the setting will be created. "As an exercise of creativity writing the teacher or the visiting artist will propose to the students to construct or deconstruct together a plot or a character. To get familiarity with difficulties of communicating stories in prose will undoubtedly enhance the capacity of the students to ad operate a language clear and efficient, free from excessive repetitions (redundancies) or hermetisms (antrophy), In other words to adapt naturally the form of the language to an optimal transmission of its contents" (From a conversation with Prof. Julio Monteiro Martins)

How texts in prose can help children to image and visualize the information to be learned

Using prose texts and developing children's comprehension skills in narrative offers extensive possibilities for integration with other areas of the curriculum. This allows learning about other people, their history and social studies, languages and arts, science, mathematics, and all the other content subjects that are taught in the schools.

In the recent years there have been several studies on the use of books and picture books to enhance the learning of curricula subjects and extensive bibliographic references are in the paper Using Children literature to teach Standard –Based Science Concept in Early Years written by Mesut Sackes, Kathy Cabe Trundle, Lucia M. Flevares “ (2009) The use of books and picture books is particularly relevant in areas such as history and geography- creating, exploring and interpreting maps, tables, graphs, etc.- science and math, —solving problems, analyzing cause and effect, reading, predicting, deducing.

How to choose the text

The selection of texts should take into consideration children's interests, background and age but also literary values and the quality of the images/ pictures. It is better to select texts together with the children and to give preference to the texts that are related to the target subjects if the text is used to teach other subjects than first and second language to promote and enhance children's personal engagement with the subjects they are learning and their emotional development, creativity and imagination. It is recognized that students who choose what they read tend to be more motivated, read more and show greater language and literacy development and also that providing a choice of books in the classroom increases motivation, effort and learning (Flowerday, T. & Schraw, G. (1992), p 634-645).

If a doubt arise is worth to consult the “Checklist for Assessing Children's Literature” at the web site <http://www.adl.org/education/assessing.asp> link active on 18 May 2012.

Some Practical Examples

Prose and Geography

Aim: This activity is intended to support the work of the teachers in the study of geography in primary schools. The children will discover different stories with an approach based on prose works about different countries that will enable them to identify geographical information, collect and organize data about geographical themes: morphology of the area, climate, fauna, flora, hydrography, orography and human settlement. To share and compare these data in a variety of

educational settings this kind of activity will enhance students' critical thinking, analytical skills, ability to understand other cultures and emphatic attitude.

Material: a copy of the selected books for each students or group of students, atlases and globes available as resources, paper A4 size or a notebook.

Teacher's skills: no specific skills are required for this activity

Process: During the first session the teacher will ask the class to explore a literary work that has been selected. If there is a library in the school the teacher can pay a visit to the library with the students and try to find out a collective selection of books to be used for this activity.

(“An example of children book to teach geography can be *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* (orig. *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa genom Sverige*, *Nils Holgersson's wonderful journey across Sweden*) that was commissioned from the Sweden National Teachers Association in 1902 to create a geography book for the public schools for children from the ages of nine to eleven. The author Selma Lagerlof created an entertaining book that was not just a dry and boring collection of texts but the various provinces and their geography are presented by means of myths and legends and birds and animals were placed in the provinces where they belonged. This book is available on line <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/lagerlof/nils/nils.html#III> After reading through the work for the sense of the story and its richness, the students will look together for any data about the geography of the setting (physical and human: Climate/Weather, Vegetation/Agriculture, Transportation, Environmental concerns, Wildlife/Animals, Natural Hazards, Population/Density/Origins/Cities/Problems, Traditions, Religions, Cultures, Language/Special words). The teacher then will ask the students to keep a record of the findings and note as well the name of the author of the book the name of the illustrator and the time period of the book. Find the location on maps and discuss within the class what the story reveals about the geography (human and physical). It will also be very useful to make comparisons with the geography of the students' location and region.

Second session: the teacher will organize cooperative learning groups of three/four children and assign each group a different book from the same region. She/he will ask the students to adopt the same methodology as the class did during the first session. At the conclusion of their work each group will bring together all of the geographical data by using one super chart or posting all of the groups' individual charts.

Extended activities:

- a) After exploring the geography of one country in different pieces of literature, the teacher can ask the students to prepare a piece of their own creative writing for a geographical setting they chose or one assigned to them. The students have to know the geographical setting before starting their own work and they would research sources to get the data and the information.
- b) Using literature to learn about geography the teacher can promote an exercise about stereotypes, use comparison among the books to identify inaccuracies in the text or illustration and identified also the development of a country during the centuries comparing stories written in different ages.

Suggested duration: 2 sessions approximately 60 minutes each

Expected outcomes: The students have acquired the necessary skills for reporting information and will be able to report them in an analytical format. The students have gained data about physical and human characteristic of different geographical places and are able to use them through the analysis and comparison of texts and through a collective discussion, their knowledge is enriched and extended..

Prose and History

Aim: this activity is intended to support the teaching of history in primary school and to improve the students' ability to learn history and memorize. Researchers have documented the appropriateness of teaching history using literature and their conclusions suggest that certain elements are integral to effective instruction in history and literature because historical narrative is more interesting and comprehensible to students than the expository writing of social studies textbooks. Among the researches carried out till now the most valuable seem to be the following:

Downey.M., & Levstik. L., (1991) *Teaching and Learning History*. Handbook of Research on Social Studies Teaching and Learning. New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Company,

Levstik. L., & Pappas. C.C., (1990, EJ 426 39) p. 327-343. *New Directions for Studying Historical Understanding*. Theory and Research in Social Education.

Material some copies of the selected book to be distributed to the children, pencils, hard surface for writing, paper (A4 size).

Teacher's skills: Skills for performing arts (drama and mime) are suitable

Process: the teacher supported by the visiting artist will select a historical period and within this period will identify a famous or less famous figure. The children will be asked to select some books/stories that deal with this specific period and with the selected historical figure. The teacher can decide to leave or not to leave the identification of the historical figure to the children. The teachers will then enhance children's historical understanding by placing the selected characters and the events related to these characters in a time period within the context of a broader framework of time. As Levstik & Pappas (Levstik & Pappas, 1990 pp.327-3343) write: “the context in which an historical event is presented and discussed may be crucial in determining whether or not children become engaged in the study of history and historical events become meaningful only through temporal and spatial links to other events”. To reach this goal the teachers will place a time line on the wall and children will read the books or article they have selected and will choose the events and the dates related to the selected figure to be written on the time line. Having the historical background the children will start working on the construction of the selected character. Each country will search the best representative examples in its own cultural tradition; as suggestion you could find below some authors who gives particular attention to the historical development in Europe: Walter Scott, Miguel de Cervantes, Lev Tolstoy, Alessandro Manzoni, Honoré de Balzac and Boris Pasternak

Dramatization of the characters could be considered an extension of this activity

Suggested duration: 2-3 sessions approximately 90 minutes each; the home reading activities are excluded from the indicated duration.

Expected outcomes: enable their students to better understand particular historical events within a contextual framework and through the construction and deconstruction of one or more historical figures.

Prose and Math

Aim: This activity is intended to support the work of the teachers in math to introduce, reinforce or expand upon the math topics the students are required to learn. To have more success in learning and understanding through the use of children books and to help students memorize fundamental mathematical concepts. To offer a creative mathematics experience to develop or explain or review mathematics concepts or skills. To develop children's opportunity for investigation and develop attitude and disposition to improve performance and skills about mathematical activity in the classroom with the final aim to motivate students to work more during math class. The proposed activity covers: simple unit conversion, systems of measurement, converts map distances, map scale.

Material: some copies of the selected book to be distributed to the children, pencils, clipboards or other portable hard surface for writing, paper (A4 size), a paper roll, tape to fix the paper roll on the wall, a globe or a planisphere, a meter, plastic coins of different currency.

Note for the teacher: Not every book is appropriate for enhancing mathematics lesson and literature. Researchers and educators have developed criteria for selecting literature that can be integrated effectively into mathematics instruction. Ideally, children's literature books should have authentic context that includes life experiences, personal or cultural episodes and enjoyable plots that unite mathematics and literacy (Jeff Worley, 2002)

Teacher's skills: no specific skills are required for this activity.

Process: The selected book for this activity is "Around the World in Eighty Days" by Jules Verne that is quoted as Jules Verne's masterpiece that stimulated our childhood and taught us more than all the atlases and that is one of the most loved work by Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy who considered Verne a master at the art of constructing a story that fascinates and impassions the reader.

First session: the teacher will illustrate the book to the students and introduce the two main characters of the book: Mr Fogg and Mr. Passepartout, then with the help of a globe or of a planisphere she/he will show the different locations and countries reached by the two gentlemen across the globe: Paris, Suez, Bombay, Calcutta, Singapore, Hong-Kong, Yokohama, San Francisco, New York, Liverpool and London. The children will take note on their paper about the different countries that Mr. Fogg and Mr. Passepartout are visiting. Then reading the book the students will identify for each visited country the currency and the system of measurement used. During the second session the teacher with the support of the information provided by the students will report all the findings on a timeline of the tour that she will draw on the paper roll that is fixed on the wall.

With this exercise the students will memorize the different systems of measurement and the distances between two different locations or countries and will compare them; personal experience gained by the students during their travels should be included to increase students' participation to the discussion and to enrich through personal experience the different findings of the selected book. During the third session the teacher will present the differences between one measure and the other and ask the students to carry out simple unit conversion within the same system of measurement or a different system of measurement: e.g. from meters to kilometers and or from kilometers to miles or money exchange e.g. from English Pounds and US dollar or the other way around and using all the different currencies mentioned in the book.

The teacher can pose also simple questions: "Which is about equal to 1 meter ? One foot or three feet? And to promote the correct answer she can ask the children to measure the shape of their foot print and compare it with a meter.

Lot of exercises can be developed using currency exchange to improve calculation, ability to counting money and learning about money as an exchange tool to purchase goods and developing responsible attitudes towards money that is very advantageous to their peer and adult environment.

Suggested duration: 3 sessions approximately 90 minutes each

Expected outcomes:

Students have a more complex understanding of mathematic concepts gained through observation and analysis. Students recognize different system of measurements used in the world and will carry out simple unit conversion. Students will be able to communicate their thoughts and make connections in mathematics from their personal experience. Skills enhanced through personal experiences will support memorization of mathematical concepts.

Poetry and Foreign Language Teaching (FLT)

Aim: This activity is intended to support the work of the teachers to develop the understanding of foreign languages. This activity supports the acquisition of vocabulary in a foreign language and the ability to construct new sentences in an enjoyable atmosphere and to improve also awareness of personal resources, self- esteem and desire to learn.

Material: Photocopies (photocopies: half of the number of the children involved in this activity) of a selected poem or poetic text in the foreign target language (FTL) where selected key target words (nouns, adjective, pronouns, verbs) have been deleted from the text, and the same number of

photocopies of the selected poem/ poetic text in vehicular language and of the list of the key target words in vehicular language.

Teacher's skills: skills for performing arts are suitable for this activity and the participation of a visiting artist or the language teacher speaking the FTL as mother tongue will contribute to support the teacher and add value to this activity. Also the use of videos can be envisaged.

Process: The teacher selects short poems in the FTL, with simple linguistic patterns and presenting themes that the students are familiar with or spontaneously have interest in. The children working in pairs or in small groups sitting on the floor or around a table will receive photocopies of the selected poem in the FTL where the key words have been deleted, photocopies of the full version of the poem in vehicular language and a list of the deleted key target words with no particular order. If there is the possibility to have a visiting person speaking the target language then the poetic text will be read aloud and possibly performed by the visiting guest. The teacher will ask the children to copy the key target words in the right place of the photocopies of FTL version poem. The teacher then will ask the children to read aloud what they have written and to mime the word or the full sentence they have prepared. The mime might become very funny when an appropriate poem is selected. This activity can be further developed in 4th and 5th grade asking the children to create new sentences with the words they have learnt and to mime them or to experiment some phonetic exercises to improve the phonemic awareness and reading skills.

More reading on phonemic awareness is available at:

<http://www.paec.org/itrk3/files/pdfs/readingpdfs/cooltoolsall.pdf>

<http://www.tacoma.k12.wa.us/schools/curriculum/subjects/literacy/elementaryliteracy/ELI/12-PH-PHONICS-SA.pdf>

Suggested duration: 1 session approximately 60 minutes

Expected outcomes: language comprehension and writing is facilitated through the practise of active reading and writing strategies, memory stimulated and increased as it is associated with body activity. Language awareness is increased and experiencing new languages becomes enjoyable.

Poetry and Natural Science

Aim: This activity is intended to support the work of the teachers in natural science disciplines. With this activity students of primary school will deepen natural science subjects selected by the class teacher. The students using creative writing will create original poems improving their listening and writing skills, will learn to express thoughts, feelings and emotions through the use of new words and information acquired during this activity. The students will reinforce learning process in natural science, will experience and express feelings and will improve communication building and effective communication.

Material includes pencils, paper of 4/5 colors A4- A3 size, markers, computer /laptop with projector and screen or information resources ((books, encyclopedias, or printed images) about selected subjects, camera or mobile phone (to take photos).

The following material is not compulsory: access to the program for the registration of the voice, recorder, microphone, speakers.

Teacher's skills: this activity requires ability to perform poems and communicate feelings to the students. The participation of an artist or a poet can be very useful and suitable for this activity.

Process: First phase: the teacher will select a natural science subject and will create a selection of 4/5 poems related to the topic. For example if the subject is the flower/plant lifecycle the poems can be about flower and/or plants. Working with 4th and 5th grade students the teacher can ask the students to select -as homework- some poems about the selected subject. The teacher will present the subject and the selected poems to the students and will distribute the poems to class. (It is suggested to have each poem on paper of different colors). If an artist is participating to this activity some warm up activities will be useful for introducing the artist to the students in this case the selection of the poems should be distributed by the artist, The students will listen the teacher or the poet reading all the poems and will select one of them. The students will be divided into groups depending on the poem they have selected. The students working in group will recognize in the poem the words related to the natural science subject they are studying and the teacher will ask them to start finding new words that rhyme with the words identified in the poem or other word related to the scientific subject and to write them on a paper. Then working in groups the students will start "stretching their writing muscles" and make poetry exercise on scientific concepts using creative writing. Brainstorming on the "old" and "new" words each group will start creating their collective own poem and the poem will be written on a paper. The written texts will be kept by the teacher as a record for the use in the second phase.

The second phase: the class all sit in a circle on the floor. The teacher/artist in the middle of the circle reads again the poem selected by the each group, and then students will read their poems and each student can add words and rhymes to the poem they have written or to the poems written by the other group and a new collective poem can be created. The artist will also read all the poems alone or together with the child. At the end of the second session all the poems will be performed and commented by the children and recorded (if a recorder will is available).

Suggested duration: two sessions approximately 90 minutes each

Expected outcomes : using brainstorming, cooperative learning and performing activities the students will know poems written by poets, will examine texts and images and /or resources of natural science subjects, will be expand their scientific vocabulary, will be able to understand and use new scientific words and write poems about natural science subjects. Students will learn to perform expressing what they have learnt.

Poetry and First Language (vehicular language)

Aim: Primary school children will learn to read, write and enjoy poetry in their vehicular language and will improve their vocabulary and their ability to create. Free fantasy will be a priority of this activity and children will explore their fantasy and spontaneous creativity without inhibition factors. Students will try to perform their poems in front of their classmates and they will acquire self-esteem. The poems can be recorded and posted as a blog on the website of the school so other students can comment on the poems and be inspired to create their own ones...

Material includes information resources a selection of poetry books or selected poems to be available to the students, pencils, paper A4- A3 size, markers.

Teacher's skills: this activity requires ability to perform poems and communicate feelings to the students. The participation of an artist or a poet can be very useful and suitable for this activity.

Process:

First session: inviting a visiting poet/teaching artist to participate to this activity will build enthusiasm for poetry through read-aloud, if a visiting poet or teaching artist is not available, these activities can be taught by the classroom teacher with the support of videos. As first step the teacher will inform the children that during that session they will play a game. The teacher/ visiting poet will show students a book of poems and will read a poem to the students giving some examples how to read it (loudly, with joy, with sadness) this will attract the interest of the children and will enhance

their creativity. Reading the poem will be the starting point to learn about rhythms and the simplest literary devices that the teacher wishes to introduce. The teachers will identify before the session one among the simplest literary devices to practice with the students (e.g. metaphors, onomatopoeia, allegory, simile alliteration), e.g. The metaphor and alliteration are very appropriate for this type of exercise because add an element of “creativity and fun” to the activity and offer an excellent exercise for exchanging and learning new words (alliteration) and creating links (metaphor). As an example the visiting artist/ teacher can suddenly stop the reading activity and ask the children to say in two seconds a word that starts with the first alphabetic letter of the last word she has pronounced or to say two or three words that begin with the same letter or to find a word that rhymes with the last word heard. Another activity can be done asking the students to brainstorm some words that sound like their meaning and write words that roll off their tongue in ways they enjoy and then write some sentences using these words. Then the poet/teachers will ask to try to re-write the words in form of sentences and create a poem of three/four lines. With this exercises the teachers will promote the ability to build narrative in a free and joyful expression.

Second session: The teacher asks the children to sit in circle on the floor and gives a certain time for doing that. The first child who sits at the end will be the first to perform his poem in front of the other students, then in turn all the students will perform their poems and will enjoy the opportunity to read aloud individually. The teacher can record the students while performing their poems and can upload all the poems on the website of the school.

Suggested duration: two sessions approximately 90 minutes each

Expected outcomes: Students will read, perform, write poems, and create their own poem learning new words and learning the meaning of the simplest literary devices. Students will use creative and artistic creations (poems) to express their personal learning, will exchange ideas promoting communication between them by improving social exchange and this will create a more comfortable class environment that will allow students to express more freely their ideas, cognitive skills will be strengthened: attention, working memory, long-term memory, auditory processing, logic and reasoning.

Resources for teachers:

Working with poetry: <http://www.stenhouse.com/assets/pdfs/stenhouse%20eBook%20sampler-small.pdf>

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ARTinED methodology P1 FNCC

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