Didactic Proposal to Foster Reading Skills in English Language for Visually

Impaired or Blind Students

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Las ideas y conclusiones aportadas en este Proyecto de Grado son responsabilidad exclusiva de

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Artículo 1ro del Acuerdo No. 324 de octubre 11 de 1966 emanado del Honorable Consejo

Directivo de la Universidad de Nariño.

Nota de aceptación:

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Resumen

La falta de material didáctico dirigido a estudiantes con discapacidad visual dificulta su proceso de aprendizaje. En cuanto a la enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera en Pasto, es evidente que la falta de material didáctico representa consecuencias negativas para los estudiantes con discapacidad visual, ya que dichos estudiantes no tienen la oportunidad de fortalecer ciertas habilidades en el idioma extranjero. Debido a la falta de material escrito en braille, en muchas ocasiones se opta por reducir el nivel de exigencia para este tipo de estudiantes o incluso dejar de lado ciertas actividades o habilidades, por ejemplo, en inglés como lengua extranjera se deja de lado la lectura y escritura. Dado que nuestro deber como docentes es preparar a los estudiantes con las habilidades necesarias para enfrentarse al mundo, debemos procurar que todos ellos tengan las mismas oportunidades de aprendizaje, de tal manera que puedan desarrollar cada habilidad propuesta. Este proyecto, propone el uso de textos en braille para acompañar el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera de los estudiantes con discapacidad visual desde tempranas etapas del aprendizaje, de tal manera que sea posible para ellos leer y escribir desde las estructuras básicas hasta las complejas de manera gradual. Esta propuesta está compuesta por cuatro temas y fue diseñada teniendo en cuenta los objetivos de aprendizaje propuestos en el "Currículo sugerido de inglés para Colombia" del programa *Colombia Bilingüe* para estudiantes de grado sexto.

Abstract

The lack of didactic material intended to visually impaired students complicate their learning process. Regarding the teaching English as a foreign language in Pasto, it is evident that the lack of didactic material represents future negative consequences for these students, as they do not have the opportunity to strengthen some skills on the foreign language. Due to the lack of braille material, teachers tend to lower the level of exigence to visually impaired students or even leave behind some skills, for instance, in English reading and writing are usually left behind. Our labor as teachers is to provide the students with the necessary abilities to face the world. Thus, we need to make our best to give all the students the same opportunities of learning and developing the necessary skills in the foreign language. This project proposes the use of braille texts to support the learning process of visually impaired students from early stages of learning, so that they are able to develop their reading and writing gradually from basic to complex structures and texts. This didactic proposal is made up of four topics and it was designed taking into account the learning objectives proposed on the "English suggested curriculum" designed by *Colombia Bilingüe* program for sixth grade students.

Contents

Introduction

In Colombia, learning English was established as a right by the law about four decades ago, but it was not until recently that the government designed a set of standards that high school students are expected to achieve at the end of each course. These standards were outlined taking into account the skills that high school students need to develop in order to acquire communicative competence. The previously mentioned skills are, reading, writing, listening, and speaking whether in a conversation or a monologue. When considering the standards, it is remarkable that they lack consideration regarding learning disabilities and learning impairments. These impairments, be them cognitive or physical, may affect language acquisition. This paper will address the latter, specifically focusing on visual impairments.

There is not enough English braille material available for blind or visually impaired people. As a consequence, these particular students only get oral input; which even if helps students develop their listening and speaking ability, does not provide opportunities to foster reading and writing skills. Blind and visually impaired students need extra support to be able to develop these skills that are left behind due to the lack of material, which causes them not to have the same opportunities to foster these skills as the students that have a healthy vision. Then, the aim of this paper is to start filling this void in the educational process by creating a unit of English braille material that will comply with the national standards. The ultimate goal is to provide blind and visually impaired students similar opportunities when learning English. The material presented in this paper serves as a basis for the creation of more braille texts to support English acquisition at different stages of learning.

Purpose of the Study

High school classrooms are very diverse, not only because each student has its own background and context, but also because some students have different learning conditions. Most of the time teachers are expected to cope these differences and still carry out the learning process, but it becomes a complex job when it comes to students who have an impairment or learning disability. This level of difficulty increases not only because the amount of attention that these students need but also for the lack on training and material to support their learning. Regarding blind or visually impaired students, one of the most common difficulty is that schools are not equipped with amplifiers or braille reading material, which normally leads to lowering the levels of exigence of visual impaired people. To lower the level of exigence causes blind and visually impaired people to lack proper competences to face the professional competitive world.

Students need to master the basic stages of learning to be able to comprehend the most complex ones. When it comes to English, ESL learners need to understand the basic structures of the language so that they are able to use and understand more complex structures of the language. In addition, due to the lack of reading English material, this kind of students lose the opportunity of approaching to English through written input, which lowers their ability to write as well. Taking into consideration the previously mentioned issues, this didactic proposal intends to provide sixth grade blind or visually impaired students with English reading material to support their learning and to provide the necessary tools to approach to basic structures of the language as well as to enhance their reading skill.

Significance of the Study

In the field of teaching English as a foreign language, there are numerous theories that suggest how language should be learnt and how this process should be carried out in order to acquire the language. However, when facing a real teaching context, the conditions of learning are unpredictable. In a regular classroom, it is possible to find students with different learning styles, multiple intelligences, and several learning conditions. Regarding these differences, there are a lot of materials available to adapt teaching to learning. However, when it comes to learning impairments, the available didactic material is limited. Furthermore, in most of the cases teachers are not even trained to guide students with impairments. Not having English braille material takes away from blind and visually impaired students the opportunity to foster skills as reading and writing; as a consequence, they are not able to get information about abstract concepts of language other than orally, which in most of the cases is not enough. This paper aims at filling that void and provide visually impaired and blind students with material written in a way they are able to read, which is braille. The didactic material designed in this paper is developed taking into account A1 CEFR level of English competence. The objective of this material is to fill the voids that students may have as consequence of the lack of English material available, thus provide students with written input of basic structures and words. Furthermore, given the lack of braille material, this paper seeks to be taken as a basis for the further development of material for beginner, intermediate, and advanced learning.

Literature Review

According to the national legislation, education in Colombia is a right, and it is mandatory for all kids between 5 and 15 years old (Const., 1991, art. 67). As stated by the same article, it is the state's responsibility to regulate and surveil it in order to guarantee that the education provided is of high quality. Regarding English learning in the country, it is stablished by the Colombian congress, that it is an objective for basic education to provide students with conversational and reading skills in a foreign language (Law 115, 1994, art. 21). In order to regulate the quality of the English that is being taught at schools around the country, the Ministry of Education has released a set of booklets and guides that establish the guidelines and parameters to standardize how English should be taught. Some examples are the Basic Learning Rights booklet and the English 22 guide, which determine basic standards, objectives, and competences to develop when teaching English in each grade of high schools.

In consonance with these guidelines, English teaching in the country seeks to develop in students a set of abilities in order to build communicative competence; the abilities considered in these guides are listening, reading, writing, monologue, and conversation. To be communicative competent in a foreign language means more than just knowing grammar structures and vocabulary, it involves being able to use and understand language in different contexts and in several formats. Hymes (1972) considers communicative competence to be "Integral with attitudes, values, and motivations concerning language, its features and uses." (p. 269-263). Thus, to develop this competence it is necessary for students to know and understand its different components such as lexical, grammatical, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, etc.

Nevertheless, in most of Colombian high schools even if the objective of achieving communicative competence is clear, the real contexts make it a difficult task to accomplish.

Students get to secondary education with gaps in basic aspects of language due to several reasons, which may include the lack of trained teachers in elementary schools, lack of technological devices. Besides, it is important to take into account the different personal backgrounds of students that can affect learning whether positively or negatively. In an educational context, it is possible to find a number of students with varied learning styles or different speed of comprehension.

Furthermore, teachers around the country face several situations for which they are not trained enough, as having students with mental or physical disabilities that would require special attention; for instance, students with visual impairment or blindness, who will need more than extra attention from the teacher in order to learn. This particular population would require to have access to tools as recorder and braille material to support their learning process. However, not all schools and not all subjects have this kind of material. As consequence, teachers are forced to lower the level and demands of some contents so that students with this disability move forward even if that means that they will have gaps related to the comprehension or practice of certain topics.

Disability

The meaning of disability in society is related to the barriers that it, and sometimes, even people with disabilities themselves have about their limitations. People see the disability not as a personal impairment but an environmental and structural barrier that influences disabled people's lives. It is usually thought that a disability has the potential to impede the progress in regular activities, for example, employment, education or leisure (French & Swain, 2013).

"Disability needs not be an obstacle to success. I have had motor neuron disease for practically all my adult life. Yet it has not prevented me from having a prominent career in astrophysics and a happy family life" (Hawking, 2011, p. 9). The World Report on Disability (2011) explains that almost, everybody has had some disability condition at some point of life. It could be a temporarily or permanently issue, depending on the seriousness of the affectation. The classification is the following: behavior disabilities, communication disabilities, personal care disabilities, locomotor disabilities, body disposition disabilities, dexterity disabilities, situational disabilities, and particular skill disabilities. The previously mentioned disabilities can be grouped into two wider categories, intellectual disabilities and physical disabilities. An intellectual disability is defined as a condition of a person who has mental disorders that affect three or more areas of life. On the other hand, a physical disability is defined as a condition that impacts people´s capacity of moving arms and legs correctly, as well as problems to eat or to breathe (Smith & Nkabinde, 2010).

Most people have a disabled person in their family or their circle of friends. Thus, someone without disability have to look after this person in order to offer help to develop regular activities. Currently, in society people with disabilities are vulnerable due to their condition. Thus, human rights are sometimes infringed due to the lack of access to resources adapted to their needs, which usually ends in exclusion and sub estimation of the disabled person (Wiman, 2003).

Handicap

According Jones (2001), society thinks that being handicapped represents a disadvantage for a determined person as a result of an impairment or disability. This condition can limit a person to develop a specific role in society according to its age, sex, cultural and social factors. However,

the word handicap does not only stand for a person who has a mental problem. To detect a handicapped person, it is necessary to identify if its conditions limit the independence of the individual in daily routine, social relationships, and environment.

Handicap is the result of a health condition in relation with some factors about personal resources and social environment. This circumstances cause disadvantages for the handicap person with the regular development of its life in society, as this condition limits the quality of people's live and socializing (Barbotte, Chau & Guillermin, 2001). The World Health Organization (1993) states that the classification of handicap is: Orientation handicap, physical independence handicap, mobility handicap, occupation handicap, and social integration handicap.

Impairment

According the World Health Organization (1993), in the health field, impairment means any disorder or abnormality based on an event or not but with any cause of effect. It means that it is not possible to unify an abnormality and disorder. For example, the loss of a leg is not a disorder but an impairment. The principal characteristic of impairment is based on losses, abnormalities or defects in the different functions of the body. It can happen that in the system or mechanism of the body, the use of the word impairment in a person does not mean that the person has a disease, or this person is sick. Instead, the word impairment refers to a problem in an anatomical structure or function.

The Office for Disability Issues (2011) reports that, this concept is not necessarily the result of an illness as it can also be caused by an accident. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the effects of the impairment rather than its causes when facing impairment. It is difficult to determine if a person has an impairment or not. To determine the existence of impairment it is

necessary to study whether it is possible or not to deal with the causes of the problem; and, take into account that not all kinds of impairment are visible and easily identifiable.

Whether the condition of a person can be classified into impairment or not depends on the consequences of this condition. If these consequences worsen, this person can be classified as handicapped. Sometimes people have more than one impairment as in the case of people with hearing impairment who have visual impairment too; this is classified as intellectual impairment. This kind of people can have many problems to communicate face to face and also to use cellphones or any type of telecommunication. Some examples of Impairment are: aural impairments, ocular impairments, visceral impairments, skeletal impairments, and disfiguring impairments. This project emphasizes on visual impairment, which will now be discussed.

Visual impairment

The term visual impairment is used to describe the absolute or partial affection of the vision. Visual impairment can be defined as the limitation of the visual system to carry out the regular functions it is meant to perform. People with visual impairment are unable to fix their eyesight to a normal level even using usual devices such as glasses or contact lenses, as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stated (2019). In 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched the first world report on vision that explain visual system functions, illnesses, preventive actions and implications of visual impairment.

The International Classification of Functioning, as mentioned in World report vision; (2019), uses the term *impairment* to describe "a problem in the function or structure of a person's body due to a health condition" (p. 10). Visual impairment affects the normal operation of the visual structure that can be caused by an illness such as glaucoma or retinopathy. It can be an inherited disease, or it can be the result of the aging process as macular degeneration or cataract.

In the article, World report on vision 2019, the WHO establishes that the regular functions of the visual system are distance visual acuity, near visual acuity, colour vision, binocular vision, contrast sensitivity. However, this functional system can be partially or entirely affected by eye conditions as age-related macular degeneration, cataract, corneal opacity, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, refractive error and trachoma. Visual impairment influences the way people perform daily life activities such as driving, socializing, walking, studying, and reading; the last two are obviously involved in the language learning process, which is this project's main concern.

Types of visual impairment

The term visual impairment has been used over the time as a general term that encompasses eye conditions that affect in a severe way one or more of the functions of the visual system and cannot be corrected using regular glasses or contact lenses. Into visual impairment, it is possible to find different conditions that are classified according to the affection of these to the visual system. To classify these conditions, it is necessary to first describe what is known as regular vision, which is usually measured in terms of visual acuity. WHO World report on vision 2019 (p. 11) declares that visual acuity is the measure of the visual system to determine if someone is capable of discriminating between two points in a space with contrast; it is classified into Distance visual acuity and Near visual acuity. Visual acuity is measured using a chart with letters or words organized by size followed by a fraction number. In the fraction, the number in the top represents the distance the patient is from the chart, while the number on the bottom stand for the distance at which person with regular vision is able to read each line. Regular vision is taken to be 20/20 measured with feet or 6/6 measured with meters. This implies that someone with 20/20 vision is able to see and read the vision chart properly when they are standing 20 feet or 6 meters away.

According to the International Classification of Diseases 11 (as cited by WHO ,2019), visual impairment can be classified according the level of visual acuity when proper visual acuity is taken to be 6/6. Then, distance vision impairment is classified into mild for people with visual acuity worse than 6/12; moderate when visual acuity is worse than 6/18; severe stands for people with visual acuity worse than 6/60; and blindness for people presenting visual acuity worse than 3/60.

Implications of visual impairment

The human senses, send information about the world to the brain. The information obtained from the exterior to the interior by means of images, sounds and textures helps humans to adapt to the world. Vision is one of the dominant senses in the human body. It is crucial for human development. Depending to the point in life when vision was affected in someone's life, it changes drastically the way this person relates to the world. Vision impairment affects a person's capacity of moving, relating to others, reading, studying among other activities. If the affection to vision occurred as a congenital condition or it occurred in the early stages of life, vision impairment also changes the way children learn about the world and relate to it. Without the visual information of the world for the brain, a kid with visual impairment would need different kinds of input to replace the visual stimuli. To learn how to eat, chew, walk are operations we take for granted, but for a blind child to learn to do them, it is necessary to count on extra help from their parents or caretakers. In order to learn how to do daily activities, a toddler with visual impairment needs aid from a third person to replace the visual stimuli with hearing or touching stimuli. In that way, as the kid is not able to see how his/her parents chew in order to eat, the parents will put the baby´s hands on their face so that he or she can feel the movement and reproduce it. Similarly, a kid with visual impairment needs to know the space in order to move in

it. In his/her own house, for instance, it is necessary to do recognition activities, so the kid has a mind map of the space and objects in the house.

For a person with visual impairment, the access to information also is affected. Even if information nowadays can be found in audio, there are limitations in terms of the written material. The innovations in technology have made it possible for visually impaired people to use computers, phones, smart TVs and other devices. Furthermore, there are technological improvements made specifically to assist people with affection on the visual system. However, in the case of these devices, for example, a Braille terminal or an allreader, the costs turn out to be too expensive for people to afford.

Braille

Braille is a writing and reading method designed for blind people. It was developed by Louis Braille a blind Frenchman. This system for blind people consists in six raised dots three in one column and three in another column. This set of dots are named cell of braille. Each dot has a number in the left column the numbers 1,2 and 3 and in the right column 4,5 and 6 from the top to bottom in the two cases. The six dots in each cell have 64 possible combinations to design letters, numbers or signs including the space which has no dots in its combination. The braille cells are grouped in a table which has seven lines to stablish the sequence and braille order in a phrase or paragraph. A blind person may write braille just with a slate and a stylus to push the dots from the back of the paper writing from right to left and then to read from left to right. Originally it was created to represent the French alphabet and then, it was adapted to be developed in many other languages such English and Spanish (Simpson 2013).

The user of braille system can also read computer screens. They can write with the regular system with slate and stylus or type on a Braille writer. Currently, with technological advances,

there are many ways for blind people to write digital using braille note-taker or braille embosser. With the rise of a variety of braille alphabets as a system of transcription of codes, the mapping is different from one language to another language. Also, braille system can be of three levels of difficulty and fluency to write. The first level is written letter-by letter using as a basic writing. In the second level, blind people use some abbreviations and contractions in order to shorten the words to get a quick write. The third level is written with personalized shorthand. This personal shorthand is not standardized because it is used in some regions for regional languages and braille is used with Unicode method.

Nowadays, there are some changes in the braille code as a consequence of the technology. These changes could be confusing for teachers and students during this period of transition. Some people use the old braille system with the old codes and signs such us the Unified English Braille. Others like Braille Basics Plus has both discontinued sings and some of the UEB code (Chamberlain, 2020).

Implications in education for visual impaired students

As stated before, visual impairment changes the way that a person relates with the environment, and the way this person performs daily activities. Education as other activities in daily life, need to be adapted taking into account the limitations and capacities of a person with visual impairment. As stated in INCI's booklet "Estrategias pedagógicas y recomendaciones para la atención de estudiantes con discapacidad visual en el aula escolar" (2020, p. 9-10), teachers need to take some considerations when they encounter a student with visual impairment. As one of the limitations for visual impaired people is to move autonomously, it is necessary for the student to make an inspection and recognition of the space, in this case of the classroom in order for him/her to have a mind map of the place regarding orientation of the chairs, relation between

the chair and teacher's desk, or distances from one place in the room to another. As the student

has a mind map of the objects and obstacles in the classroom, it is important to keep this layout

inside the classroom and in case of any change, this type of students need to be informed.

Furthermore, teachers need to describe and communicate orally what is being written or drawn in

the board.

According to Colombian laws, visual impaired students must be accepted in the regular

schools. It is understood that visual impaired students need assistance, and their education must

be adapted to their needs and capabilities without leaving behind the knowledge these students

need to acquire during a specific period of time. Nevertheless, regular schools do not have the

resources needed and most of their teachers are not trained in terms of impairment to be able to

compensate the lack for visual input. Consequently, most of the time, the lack of visual input is

compensated orally. For instance, visual impaired students usually record classes in order to

listen to them again the necessary times to understand and study. This technique works with most

of the courses, especially when these focus on theory. However, there are courses in which the

student needs more than a recorded explanation; this is the case of practical courses such as

mathematics, physics, chemistry, and English.

EFL for visually impaired students

As English as a foreign language requires practical skills, it is not enough for students to

record and listen to the lessons in order to learn. Learning English involves developing the four

abilities and sub-skills, among other competences, in order to be able to communicate

effectively. However, when it comes to blind students, as most of the input is provided orally, the

reading and writing skills are generally neglected. In regular schools, there is not braille material

on all subjects or in all topics. Besides, most of teachers are not trained in braille, so they are not

able to create their own material. As consequence, what usually happens is that teachers tend to simplify what is to be learned, even if it means to downgrade the content or leave skills undeveloped in people with visual impairment.

One of the most common issues for native Spanish speakers when learning English as a foreign language is that learners tend to write words as they sound, as they would do in Spanish because there is relationship between sound and spelling. This situation is even harder for blind or visually impaired students who had not gotten the necessary foundations in the language.

Visually impaired ESL students need to have tools to support language learning. As they are not able to link words with images, it is necessary that they have material that they can touch, feel and explore in order for them to have an idea of the words and structures. It is important to point out that that visually ESL students need to have previous braille knowledge on their mother tongue. It is also important to use real objects as much as possible to teach vocabulary. There must be a physical and sensory approach to the language from the most basic terms, as these basic terms and words are the means for a student to be able to comprehend complex structures. As stated by Martínez-Liébana and Polo (2004, p.27), for a blind or visually impaired person, touching becomes the main mean access the world. These techniques will provide meaningful experiences for the students to approach to the language.

Fostering reading in students with visual impairment

According to the Braille reading standards adapted by the California Department of Education web page (2006) "Reading and writing for the student who is blind are becoming lost skills. Success depends upon the ability of a child to read and write, be it in print or braille" (p. 8). This is clearly a consequence of the lack of braille material available. Years ago, the attention for visual impaired people in Colombia was provided by the National Institute for the Blind in

Colombia (INCI for its initials in Spanish) with headquarters in the main cities around the country. The institute provided visually impaired people with medical attention and support. This institution also offered braille material and specialized devices for people with visual impairment. Currently, there is no longer an INCI headquarter in Nariño. Thus, the attention to impaired population in our region for visually, auditory, and cognitively impaired is provided by "Aula de apoyo tecnológico para personas con discapacidad" at Nariño University. In this institution, people with visual impairment have access to braille books, braille training, and braille copies. Nevertheless, the existent material in English is limited. This office at Nariño University also offers a seminar to train in the field of braille, abacus for not visually impaired people, and teaching to visually impaired students. Given the context of public school, this seminar should be attended by students whose degree is related to pedagogy. However, the attendance to this seminar is low.

The reading skill in English teaching, even if adapted to visually impaired students, must be developed at the same level for all students. It means that teachers should teach the same content or readings for a class, but applying different strategies in order to develop the material according to learning styles or in this case visual impaired students. Regular students who are no visually impaired have standard materials to learn, but in the case of visually impaired students, having the same standard materials as the rest of the class becomes more difficult. Some tools visually impaired or blind students use to support their knowledge are usually recorders and braille as stated previously. These strategies help the student to acquire the knowledge expected to be learnt according to their age and level, and to reach the levels and standards projected for them. Nevertheless, due to the lack of recorders or braille material, it becomes much more difficult for students to learn as they would have to rely on their memory. Consequently, teachers

ease the content or assessment standards leaving gaps of knowledge in visually impaired or blind students. As Hortúa (2013) mentions, it is important to clarify that even no visually impaired students have difficulties achieving the expected standards of learning, and this issue becomes more frequent with blind or visually impaired learners.

Kashdan and Barnes (as cited by Kocyigit & Artar, 2015) explain the importance of acknowledging students as individuals with multiple and multisensory learning processes. Teachers need to help learners with visual limitations to improve their learning process. To support their learning, it is necessary to work with the same material for all students. Teachers can translate into braille the most important readings of the course. Translating readings can be not only time consuming but also expensive. That is why it is recommended to translate only the most important reading. However, it will support the learning process (Carrera, 2017). Moreover, the teacher should check on the visual impaired student frequently in order track their progress. Also, Kashdan and Barnes (as cited by Kocyigit & Artar, 2015) recommend including in the classroom games that combine words and activities as students who are blind or visually impaired are able to learn by associating language with body movement experience.

Taking these considerations during the class will improve the participation, motivation and learning process of visually impaired students. Thus, students will be able to achieve the normal standards and different goals in communicative competences in the school (Erasmus,2015)

Didactic proposal

Proposal Description

This English reading material is designed to provide blind or visually impaired sixth graders with Braille English worksheets. This material is designed based upon the suggested syllabus for sixth grade on "Suggested Curriculum structure" produced by the program of Colombia Bilingüe. These guidelines set four modules of learning for each grade from sixth to eleventh. Thus, this sample aims to design four braille materials corresponding to a selected topic in each module set on the guidelines for sixth grade; similarly, the material takes into account grammar points and suggested vocabulary. The sample material is designed in the following order: topic 1: To identify words and phrases related to personal information and daily activities in simple oral and written texts; topic 2: To identify words and phrases about routines, likes, and interests in simple oral and written texts; topic 3: To identify phrases and expressions on daily activities in short oral and written texts and topic 4: To identify phrases and expressions related to characteristics of persons, celebrations and places in short oral and written texts.

As mentioned before, this material will be followed by the whole class, and the teacher would pay close attention to the visual impaired students to check their understanding. Furthermore, visually impaired students are allowed to hand in the written responses of the activities in a different piece of paper. Finally, this braille material is set up taking into account U.S English without contractions, as it is to be used at an academic level. The braille material will be printed over the ink texts so that the teachers are able to follow and assist the student during the reading. Similarly, this will allow the student to participate in pair or group directed activities as other students will be also able to read from the ink words. It is important to clarify that the following texts are intended to work with the whole class with the sole difference that the rest of the class

would have ink printed text and activities, while blind and visually impaired students would have this on braille. The didactic material above mentioned was designed over bond paper which caliber is higher than 28 using braille guidelines to create the necessary relief.

Didactic proposal

Topic : 1   **Grammar point: Simple present tense**

Objective of learning: Identify words and phrases related to personal information and daily activities in simple written texts.

My life

Hi my name is Carlos, I am 11 years old and I am from Colombia. I live with my parents and my older brother. I wake up early every day. I take a shower, and I get ready for school before 7am. I study in a little school in the city center. I am in sixth grade. My favorite subjects are English and technology; I love learning about new tools in the computers and my least favorite subject is biology. I live in a small town near the beach. My town is beautiful and warm. Me and my family live in a big house in the main street of the town. My best friend lives next to my house. We go to school together every day. After school, my brother and me play soccer with our friends from the neighborhood. On weekends, my friends and I go to the beach in the morning. We like to swim until noon and have lunch in a local restaurant. In the afternoon, we like to walk on the shore and pick up trash that some people leave on the sand.

Activity

1. Choose the correct option to complete the sentence

a. Carlos lives with…

    A. His parents and his younger brother

    B. His parents and his older brother

    C. His parents and his older sister

b. His least favorite subject at school is…

    A. Biology

    B. Physical education

    C. Technology

c. Every day, he…

    A. Goes to the beach with his friends

    B. Goes to school with his best friend

    C. Goes to school with his brother

d. He and his friends go to the beach…

    A. Every morning

    B. Every weekday

    C. Every weekend

2. Answer true or false according to the text

a. Carlos studies in a big school near the city center.	True	False
b. His favorite subjects are English and technology.	True	False
c. He plays basketball with his brother and friends.	True	False
d. On weekends in the afternoon, he and his friends play videogames.	True	False

3. Rewrite the card adding your own personal information

My name is _____. I am _____ years old and I am from

_____. I live in _____. I live with _____. I study in

_____ school and I am in_____ grade. My favorite subject is

_____ and my least favorite subject is _____.

Topic : 2   **Grammar point: Present tense**

Objective of learning: To identify words and phrases about routines, likes and interests in

simple written texts.

My daily routine

My name is Ian. I am 12 years old. I live with my parents in a small town near a big lake. We

love our town. Every day, I wake up at 7am and have breakfast with my parents. I like to eat

pancakes for breakfast. Then, I usually walk my dog; he likes going to the park every day. I go to

school by foot. I enjoy walking in the mornings. I love going to school because I learn something

new every day; my favorite subject is mathematics. After the classes, I like to spend time with

my friends. We usually play videogames until it is lunch time. Almost always, I finish my

homework before having dinner. Even though I dislike vegetables, we frequently have a healthy

dinner at home. My favorite part of the day is when we eat together and talk about our day.

Finally, at night, I go to sleep and get ready for the next day. On weekends, my parents and I like

to go hiking to the big lake. They go fishing while me and my dog play. We enjoy the peace of

that place.

Activity

EFL READING FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

1. Organize chronologically Ian's routine during day. Rewrite the sentences to organize them

    a) Ian finishes his homework

    b) Ian and his parents have dinner and talk

    c) Ian wakes up at 7am

    d) Ian and his parents go hiking

    e) Ian goes to school by foot

    f) Ian plays videogames with his friends

2. Choose the correct form of the verb to fill the blank

a. I _____ with my parents in a small town near a big lake

 A. lives   B. living   C. live

b. He _____ going to the park ever day

A. likes   B. like   C. liked

c. We usually _____ videogames until is lunch time

A. played   B. is play   C. play

d. My parents _____ fishing while me and my dog play.

A. goes   B. go   C. went

3. Read the text and find things that Ian likes, enjoys and loves and write them

    a. Ian likes…

    _____

    b. Ian enjoys…

    _____

    c. Ian loves…

    _____

4. Answer the questions following the example

What is your favorite color? <u>My favorite color Is blue</u>

a. What is your favorite subject at school?

b. What do you enjoy doing on weekends?

c. What is your favorite food?

d. What do you love about your family?

c. What do you like to do in the school?

Topic : 3   **Grammar point: Present tense**

Objective of learning: To identify phrases and expressions on daily activities in short written texts.

First day at school

Ana: Hi, my name is Ana. Are you the new 7th grade student?

Jorge: Yes, I am. My name is Jorge. Nice to meet you!

Ana: That is awesome, we can be friends. How old are you?

Jorge: I am 13 years old and you?

Ana: I am 14 years old. Where do you live?

Jorge: I live in San Juan neighborhood; it is very far from the school. Where do you live?

Ana: I live in San Diego neighborhood; it is also very far, so I have to wake up at 5:00am to be at school on time. How do you come to school?

Jorge: My father takes me every morning by car, but I go back to my house by bus. What do you do after school?

Ana: I usually do my homework after lunch, so I have free time to play videogames

Jorge: Awesome!!! I like to play videogames as well, maybe we can play online someday

Ana: That would be great! We can play before 4pm

Jorge: What do you do at 4pm?

Ana: I practice Volleyball from 4pm to 6pm. Now, come with me I'll show you the school

Jorge: Perfect, thanks a lot!

Activity

1. Choose the best word to complete the sentence.

a. Jorge_____ play videogames

       A. like

       B. likes

       C. don't like

       D. doesn't like

b. Jorge and Ana _____ very far from the school

       A. Live

       B. Lives

       C. Doesn't live

       D. Don't live

c. Jorge _____ to school by bus

       A. Go

       B. Goes

       C. Doesn't go

       D. Don't go

d. They _____ play videogames

    A. Love

    B. Loves

    C. Doesn't love

    D. Don't love

2. Answer the questions.

    a. **How** does Jorge go to school?

    _____

    b. **What** does Ana do after school?

    _____

    c. **What time** does Jorge wake up?

    _____

    d. **Where** does Jorge live?

    _____

3. Write 5 sentences about your daily routine.

Examples:

- *I usually get up at 7:30am*

- *I have a breakfast at about 8 o'clock*

1. _____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

Topic : 4   **Grammar point: Simple present**

Objective of learning: To identify phrases and expressions related to characteristics of persons, celebrations and places in short written texts

My favorite time of the year

My name is Lisa and I'm 9 years old. My favorite time of the year is Christmas because I get to see my whole family. Every year, my aunt visits us with her two daughters. First, we go around the city to see the Christmas lights decorations on the street; it is always stunning. The days after, me and my cousins play all day long. We love to play chess; we also enjoy watching cartoons and comedy films, but our favorite activity is camping in the living room of the house. On Christmas morning, we wake up very before everyone else and run down the stairs to the Christmas three. There, we normally find presents for each one of us and some candy to share. We almost always play all morning with our new toys. Every year, my parents plan a Christmas party at our house. Then, after lunch, we go upstairs to get ready for the party while my mom and my aunt decorate the house. I wear my favorite clothes, and my mom combs my hair. The guests start to arrive around 4pm. Everyone brings food and presents to share. That is why I love Christmas!

Activity

1. Answer the questions.

   a. When do children get their presents?

_____

b. Where do their parents leave the presents?

_____

c. Who participates in the party?

_____

d. What are the traditions in this family?

_____

e. What does Lisa's mother do for Christmas?

_____

2. Fill in with **Do** or **Does** in the following sentences.

   For example: <u>Do</u> her cousins play chess all day?

   a. _____ Lisa live in a city?

   b. _____ Lisa and her cousins play all day?

   c. _____ Lisa's aunt have three daughters?

   d. _____ Lisa's mom and her aunt decorate the house?

3. Use don't or doesn't in the following sentences.

   For example: Lisa <u>doesn't</u> have a boring day

   a. Lisa _____ live with her aunt

   b. Lisa's mother _____ hate Christmas

   c. Cousins _____ help to decorate the house for Christmas

   d. Her parents _____ plan vacations in another city

4. Are the statements below true or false?

a. Lisa loves spending time with her family   True   False

b. Lisa's mother and her aunt are very creative   True   False

c. Lisa plays videogames with her cousins   True   False

d. Her parents hate parties   True   False

e. Her cousins eat pizza at the party   True   False

Conclusion

To conclude, as consequence of the lack of English reading material available in public schools and even the lack of teacher training on techniques to approach to visually impaired students learning, these students face a different learning experience where the learning assessment is downgraded. This situation often causes visually impaired students not to be prepared enough to face the competitive working world and to become dependent on their pairs and relatives. To provide these students with the necessary tools to support their learning, it is necessary to understand the different ways in which they can learn and perceive the world. Reading in English becomes usually a lost skill for visually impaired students who did not have access to reading material displayed in a proper way when learning the basic components of the language, so they did not have the opportunity to understand written English from scratch. In consequence, when blind or visually impaired students face an English text they will not be able to comprehend the content. This didactic proposal seeks to provide visually impaired students with reading material to support their English learning. In addition, this material is also printed in ink to ease the monitoring from the teacher and gives the blind or visually impaired student the opportunity to complete a collaborative work with his or her pairs.

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