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EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LUDIC ACTIVITIES IN L2

CLASSROOMS

CRICIÚMA, DECEMBER 2010.

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**“Tell me and I’ll forget; show me
and I may remember; involve me
and I’ll understand”**

Chinese Proverb

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LUDIC ACTIVITIES IN L2 CLASSROOMS

RESUMO:

Pesquisas em aprendizagem de uma segunda língua (L2) tem demonstrado muitas vezes que as crianças aprendem melhor quando os professores de Inglês propõem atividades nas quais as crianças possam brincar e se divertir (Almeida, 2010; Argondizzo, 1992; Bacha, 2010; Cameron and Mckay, 2010; Cook, 2000; Leventhal, 2006; Mckay, 2006; Nogueira, 2010; Nunes, 2009; Peck, 2001; Read, 1998; Reilly & Ward, 1997; Silveira, 2010; Tambosi, 2006; Vale and Feunten, 1995; Vygotsky, 1994). Devido à importância da ludicidade na aprendizagem de uma L2, este estudo visa avaliar a eficácia de algumas atividades lúdicas aplicadas por professores de Inglês em um curso particular de aulas de Inglês para crianças. Portanto, o objetivo principal deste estudo foi investigar o que os professores fazem para motivar os alunos nas aulas de L2, bem como avaliar que atividades lúdicas as crianças gostam mais. Os resultados mostraram que os professores utilizam as atividades lúdicas com o objetivo de motivar a participação dos alunos e promover a interação nas aulas de L2. Este estudo também forneceu uma contribuição inestimável para o conhecimento teórico e prático dos professores no que diz respeito ao ensino de Inglês a jovens aprendizes.

Palavras - chave: crianças, atividades lúdicas, motivação, brincar.

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LUDIC ACTIVITIES IN L2 CLASSROOMS

ABSTRACT:

Research in L2 learning has often demonstrated that children learn English better when teachers propose activities in which children might play and have fun (Almeida, 2010; Argondizzo, 1992; Bacha, 2010; Cameron and McKay, 2010; Cook, 2000; Leventhal, 2006; McKay, 2006; Nogueira, 2010; Nunes, 2009; Peck, 2001; Read, 1998; Reilly & Ward, 1997; Silveira, 2010; Tambosi, 2006; Vale and Feunten, 1995; Vygotsky, 1994). Due to the importance of ludicity in L2 learning this study aims at evaluating the effectiveness of some ludic activities applied by English teachers in a private language course in English classes for children. Therefore, the main objective of this study was to investigate what teachers do in order to motivate students in L2 classes, as well as evaluate what ludic activities do children enjoy the most. The results suggested that teachers use ludic activities in order to motivate students' participation and promote interaction in an L2 class. This study also provided an invaluable contribution to teachers' theoretical and practical knowledge as regards teaching English to young learners.

Key - words: children, ludic activities, motivation, playing.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest challenges related to teaching English to young learners is fostering students' motivation so as to learn English and interact with their peers. Teachers are not often well prepared to use theoretical and practical knowledge so as to implement ludic activities in English classes, especially for young learners. Leventhal (2006), highlights that playing is a way to wake up children's curiosity to learn English. Thus, ludic activities are considered powerful because they have shown to be effective in order to create a favorable environment for language learning.

As many researchers have pointed out (Argondizzo, 1992; Cameron & McKay, 2010; Cook, 2000; Leventhal, 2006; McKay, 2006; Peck, 2001; Reilly & Ward, 1997; Rossini, 2003; Schwartz, 2004; Vale & Feunteun, 1995) kids learn English by using different techniques and strategies, such as: repeating; watching; doing / performing; listening; looking / speaking; doing the activities / singing; touching / exploring / moving; running / playing. As a consequence, children learn English by imitating sounds and structures they hear. Thus, teachers may use activities which focus on what children like.

However, teaching English to kids is not an easy task. Young learners are sometimes unpredictable, that is, they can love and hate an activity at the same time. Therefore, teachers have to be very patient, comprehensive, friendly, and creative. When teachers are going to prepare a class they need to bear in mind their students' needs and characteristics. They have to address some important issues such as: what are the objectives of the class, what to do, how to do, what kinds of activities the one needs to apply, how long each activity takes, what materials will be used, and how to check and evaluate students' progress in L2 learning.

The present study attempts to verify as well as to analyze the importance and effectiveness of ludic activities in children's English classes. Several studies have suggested that the use of ludic activities with young learners provides a positive impact in L2 learning (Almeida, 2010; Argondizzo, 1992; Cameron, 2000; Cameron & McKay, 2010; Cook, 2000; Faria, 2006; Leventhal, 2006; McKay, 2006; Nogueira, 2010; Nunes, 2009; Peck, 2001; Reilly & Ward, 1997; Rossini, 2003; Schwartz, 2004; Silveira, 2010; Vale & Feunteun, 1995; Vygotsky, 1994) . In other words, by employing activities in which kids can play, have fun and use their imagination, children can create contexts and assimilate new meanings easily. Consequently, the more teachers prepare challenging activities for children the more students are going to be motivated to study and participate in the language classes.

Considering the importance of ludic activities, this study attempts to address the following research questions:

- 1) What do teachers do in order to motivate young learners in L2 classes?
- 2) What kinds of ludic activities do children enjoy the most?

The next chapter presents a review of literature in the field of ludic activities for young learners and the importance of ludic activities in L2 classes.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter aims at providing an overall overview of the research on teaching English to children. Therefore, this chapter is divided into four sections. The first section presents a general discussion on ludic activities, as well as review of literature in the field of L2 learning. The second section discusses distinct characteristics children present when they are learning an L2. The third section reports some advantages of ludic activities in L2 classes for children. Finally, the fourth section highlights the importance of class preparation and shows what researchers have suggested in the field.

2.1 Ludicity in children's learning process

According to Almeida (2010), the word “ludic” is originated from the Latin word “*ludus*”, which means “*game*”. However, studies show that ludicity is not just playing (Cook, 2000; Leventhal, 2006; Luckesi, 2000). Ludicity deals with human beings' body and mind. Furthermore, Luckesi (2000) points out that a ludic activity may offer to the person good feelings of experience their own work. According to researchers, when children participate in ludic activities they feel happy, flexible, healthy, and concentrated in the process. Otherwise, if students are not concentrated they are divided, this way the activity can not be considered ludic. In accordance to Bustamante (2004), when performing ludic activities children might demonstrate several feelings. “The ludic manifestations are characterized by playful moments

of pleasure, happiness, and entertainment provided by parties, games, dances, as well as other numerous unexpected opportunities of cultural expression”¹ (p.55-56).

Research suggests that schools have been changing their methodologies, and educators have also observed that children are not learning through traditional methods and approaches of L2 teaching. According to Emerique (2004), teachers have to reflect what we learn about ludicity. Some years ago “playing” was not recognized as a good tool for the learning process at schools. In addition, playing was something not serious; it was just used to spend time. In previous decades teachers would often say: “Ok children stop playing now, because it is time to study”. Generally, people have a negative overview of playful activities because they witnessed their teachers separating a part of the class to “play”, which was considered a waste time. As a consequence, some parents and educators still have a “bad” vision about playing in the classes.

Piaget (1972) states that traditional schools do not know the real meaning of games in young learners learning process. For these schools, games are just hobbies and time lost. Therefore, it is important that schools and teachers recognize the fundamental role of ludicity in L2 classes for children. For this reason, researchers state that ludic activities are pleasant and full of meanings. In accordance to Lopes (2005), schools and educators from different areas were always worried with teaching methods, but now they want to study and find out more about how children learn. This idea can be verified in the following statement: “Educators have been for many years busy with the teaching methods. Only now a major

¹ My translation: “As manifestações lúdicas caracterizam-se por momentos de prazer, alegria e diversão propiciados pela festa, pelos jogos, pelas brincadeiras, e pelas danças, como também por outras inúmeras e inesperadas possibilidades de expressão cultural” (p.55-56).

concern is to discover how children learn. The most distinct methodologies may be ineffective if they are not suited to the way a child learns”²(p.35).

Lopes (2005) states that playing for young learners is a universal characteristic, that is, children have always played even in different civilizations. Thus, why do not teach in a way in which children learn faster and better? By the same token, Aguiar (1998) claims that ludic activities are essential in schools because teachers may introduce contents which students think are difficult and boring.

Moreover, Silveira (2010) states that the action in ludic activities is crucial. Thus, it is also relevant to highlight that during all the activities children are supposed to use their creativity and imagination in order to build or invent new concepts. This is why the process taken by the activities is considered essential. Luckesi (2000) points out that ludic activities are constructive and when people are practicing that kind of activity they need to participate using their body and mind. For instance, when children are playing a game in which they need to move in the classroom they practice the language in order to complete the task. Luckesi (2000) highlights that:

“Ludic activities, themselves, are constructive as they are actions, and we know from several theoretical traditions, human beings act while they are changing the world, they change themselves... Playing, to play, act out ludic activities, requires a total surrender of the human being, body and mind at the same time. Ludic activities do not allow division, and the own ludic activities lead us to the state of consciousness”³ (p.20-21).

Therefore, defining the term “ludic” is not an easy task because it deals with different feelings and competences. It is important to highlight that ludic activities are not just games.

² My translation: “Os educadores se ocuparam durante muitos anos com os métodos de ensino, e só hoje a preocupação está sendo em descobrir como a criança aprende. As mais variadas metodologias podem ser ineficazes se não forem adequadas ao modo de aprender da criança” (p.35).

³ My translation: “As atividades lúdicas, por si mesmas, são construtivas, na medida em que são ações; e, sabemos, a partir de várias tradições teóricas, que o ser humano enquanto age modificando o mundo, modifica-se a si mesmo... Brincar, jogar, agir ludicamente, exige uma entrega total do ser humano, corpo e mente, ao mesmo tempo. A atividade lúdica não admite divisão; e, as próprias atividades lúdicas, por si mesmas, nos conduzem para esse estado de consciência” (p.20-21).

According to Cook (2000) ludic activities are the activities that students enjoy to perform. Furthermore, Rossini (2003) highlights that children just learn effectively when they relate the contents in the class with their own interests. In other words, they learn when they are concentrated and the activity calls their attention. For instance, when teachers want to teach about animals they should prepare activities related to students' reality, take pictures of the classroom, prepare a story to tell them, and even build a bingo with students in class. Teachers should use techniques, objects, games, and materials which are going to call kids attention. I strongly believe that, teachers need to contextualize, prepare, explore, and model the activities. In addition, all kind of sources can be used, because the most important point is to get students involved in class and have their participation in a spontaneous and natural way. As a result, learners might develop their L2 with greatest motivation.

In accordance to Freire (2002) games are not just games; they have important goals to be reached. Firstly, children are expected to move. Secondly, they are going to imagine and create meanings. Thus, they are going to expose their ideas through speaking the target language. Finally, as they are using the language they are interacting with their classmates.

Lopes (2005) points out that the use of ludic activities provides great results. Teachers reach their goals easily and students learn through a fun way. The author cites several important benefits for using ludic language. These benefits are divided into cognitive, motor, and psychological factors. According to researchers, ludic activities help students deal with their anxiety. This aspect can be observed in activities in which students should have much concentration such as: preparing puppets, bingo cards or playing hangman. By using games in class teachers also have the possibility to help students to comprehend limits and rules. Moreover, students are going to be proud of themselves when they help teachers prepare the rules. In addition, students are going to develop their attention and concentration much easier, because they are doing something they really enjoy.

Furthermore, ludic activities foster imagination. As a consequence, children can develop their creativity and autonomy. They are also going to learn how to be organized and how to take care of their own things. Thus, young learners are going to be responsible for their own actions. While they are involved in the activities they need to trace, color, fold, paste or cut.

By the same token, while playing children might develop strategies to anticipate the actions and results. They also learn how to work in groups. Sometimes games are a little competitive. Thus, teachers have great opportunities to work with their students on how students should react when they win or lose. Another important aspect, which is developed in ludic activities, especially games, is the group work. Teachers may divide and mix students into different groups. By doing this, students are going to know each other and develop team work skills. Moreover, through games they are going to practice the language structures in a pleasure and fun way.

2.2 Issues related to children learning English

According to Tambosi (2006), “children learning English as a foreign language have become a phenomenon” (p. 1). This happens because the world is getting much competitive, and human beings are worried about learning an L2. This situation forces parents with better financial conditions to offer their children the opportunity to study English.

Following the same view, Cameron (2003) states that “the expansion of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) is a phenomenon that needs to be taken seriously by the ELT field” (p.105). Nowadays, English teachers face great issues in children’s L2 classrooms. Teachers are not often well prepared to use theoretical and practical knowledge so as to implement ludic activities in English classes, especially for young learners. Tambosi

(2006) also highlights that most literature about children learning English shows types of activities to be performed in the classrooms instead of dealing with the learning process and researching about what really happens in young language learners classes.

Read (2003) states that children learn an L2 better when they are young. However, teachers need to take into account if children are learning an L2 in a natural way, without having much effort. Thus, according to the author, a child learning an L2 in the early ages is better when:

- learning is natural
- learning is contextualized and part of a real event
- learning is interesting and enjoyable
- learning is relevant
- learning is social
- learning belongs to the child
- learning has a purpose for the child
- learning builds on things the child knows
- learning makes sense to the child
- the child is challenged appropriately
- learning is supported appropriately
- learning is part of a coherent whole
- learning is multi-sensory
- the child wants to learn
- learning is active and experiential
- learning is memorable
- learning allows for personal, divergent responses
- learning takes account of multiple intelligences
- the learning atmosphere is relaxed and warm
- there's a sense of achievement (p. 7)

One of the most important aspects that have to be considered when teaching English to children is that young learners have their own needs. In accordance to Vale and Feunten (1995) children need a learning situation in which they may develop the overall education, the English language skills, and their social development too. The ESL teacher should be aware that teaching English to children is not an easy task, neither a difficult one. Moreover, teachers should focus on children's needs, children's development, interests, and on their likes and dislikes. Therefore, it is crucial that teachers offer a varied set of activities for children, in order to motivate and encourage them to learn an L2. In accordance to Vale and Feunten

(1995), if teachers involve their young learners, value their work and their achievements children learn in a natural way.

Additionally, Vale and Feunten (1995) state that children face a silent period⁴ in which they do not produce language they just process what they are attending in the classes. Thus, teachers should not force children to speak because young learners have their own pace. Children do not learn at the same pace or in the same manner. Some might have greater challenges, while others might have no difficulties at all. If teachers understand students first, the learners will show the successful results when they are ready to speak and feel comfortable to do it. According to Reilly & Ward (1997), in the silence period children are just absorbing language without producing. However, if teachers perform repetitive activities children feel more confident to reproduce the language in a pleasant and natural way and when teachers notice they produce something.

Mckay (2006) states that some children do not go through the silent period because of their differences on their language learning strategies, on their own personality, or even on their language learning environment. For instance, children that show a strong need for social interaction will learn faster than those young learners who are shier.

In line with Vale and Feunten ideas, Mckay (2006) points out that children enter the classrooms with individual characteristics. They bring their different personalities, likes, dislikes, interests, strengths, weakness, even their own individual learning styles to learn. Young learners' cognitive, social, emotional and physical characteristics are changing. By the same token the attention span of young children is short; they may drop out of the tasks when they find it difficult or if they are distracted by a classmate. From 5 to 7, children are learning to share and divide materials with their classmates, they are also developing the ability to work in small groups. At the same period, they are increasing their fine-motor skills and the

⁴ According to Mckay (2006), the silent period is a phase in which children watch, listen, and interact, but do not speak. During this period children are unwilling to communicate orally in the target language.

abilities to move around with more facilities. “Young learners around this age have a need to play and to engage in fantasy and fun” (p. 10).

Peck (2001) points out that kids are different from adults, as language learners. For instance, kids like movement (e.g. running, walking, or jumping), but they do not enjoy long activities. Therefore, successful activities for children should not take more than eight or ten minutes. Kids are also emotional. They can easily cry or be quiet. Sometimes, when they do not like to do something they can even become aggressive. On the other hand, young learners like to show their independence through helping each other and the teacher. Furthermore, children like imaginative activities because they are curious. For this reason, they can create contexts, and also assimilate the meanings easily. In accordance to Brown (2001) teaching English to children demands from the teacher distinct abilities, activities, and approaches. Therefore, the more teachers prepare challenging activities for children the more students are going to be motivated to study and participate.

Vale and Feunten (1995) highlight that, another important step that teachers who teach an L2 for young learners need taking into consideration “is to establish a good working relationship with children, and encourage them to do the same with their classmates” (p. 27). For instance, the teacher may need to use techniques so as to call students’ attention, and then build a friendly relationship with them. In addition, students may feel not confident in the classroom because they are in a different space with unknown people. As a consequence, the teacher’s role is to introduce the child to what is strange in a natural way using a comfortable scenario, toys and specially lots of visual tools which call students’ attention. As mentioned previously, if children do not feel secure and comfortable they may learn very little.

Therefore, the classroom environment is also crucial when children are learning an L2. Mckay (2006) shows that young learners really need a safe environment in order to interact

with their classmates and use the language they learned. This idea can be verified in the following excerpt:

“ ... young foreign and second language learners need a safe environment, where they can take their time before they start to talk, but where they are encouraged to take risks. That safe environment also gives them opportunities to learn the different discourses of the classroom, to become full members of the classroom community, and to develop, without fear, new identities within it. While children are interacting, they benefit from positive experiences and positive feedback.” (p.43)

Read (1998) highlights some important guidelines which will help students to create “a relaxed, happy, child-centred teaching/learning environment.” (p.9). Thus, in order to learn an L2 in a successful environment, teachers may:

- Treat children as different individuals;
- Value children’s participation and their work;
- Praise children for their good behavior;
- Keep the expectations high;

Children learn English in several distinct ways. They may learn by performing, listening, watching, playing, touching, moving, running, coloring, matching, identifying, singing, exploring, repeating, acting out and interacting with their classmates. As stated before, teachers should create a pleasant environment for children learn English. By the same token, teachers should focus on children’s development, children’s needs, children’s interests, and on themselves.

Interestingly, in accordance to Vale and Feunten (1995) it is important for the teacher to establish some priorities for the child as a learner:

- Building confidence;
- Providing the motivation to learn English;
- Encouraging ownership of language;
- Encouraging children to communicate with whatever language they have at their disposal (mime, gesture, key word, drawings, etc.);
- Encouraging children to treat English as a communication tool, not as an end product;
- Showing children that English is fun;
- Establishing a trusting relationship with the children, and encouraging them to do the same with their classmates;
- Giving children an experience of a wide range of English language in a non-threatening environment; (p. 33)

2.3 Ludic activities in English classes for young learners: advantages and benefits

Several studies have shown that ludic activities are effective in order to create a favorable environment for children learning English easier (Almeida, 2010; Argondizzo, 1992; Bacha, 2010; Cameron and Mckay, 2010; Cook, 2000; Leventhal, 2006; Mckay, 2006; Nogueira, 2010; Nunes, 2009; Peck, 2001; Read, 1998; Reilly & Ward, 1997; Silveira, 2010; Tambosi, 2006; Vale and Feunten, 1995; Vygotsky, 1994). By the same token, those authors also considered ludicity powerful to motivate students to engage in all kinds of activities proposed by the teacher. Vale and Feunten (1995) point out that the needs of young learners are very important factors to consider when teaching children. Therefore, teachers who teach English to young learners have to focus the activities on children's needs. Teachers may know the learners' intellectual, social, physical, and emotional development in order to prepare a class in which learners are going to build their own concepts and autonomy.

According to Leventhal (2006) ludic activities help children to take decisions, to learn rules, to help each others in order to accomplish a specific task "More than fun, in these activities students will develop their language, thought, creativity, initiative. Through games children learn to make decisions, establish and exchange relations, deal with the rules, solve conflicts and find solutions to their difficulties"⁵ (p.12).

Furthermore, ludic activities stimulate kids learning English in a funny way, because they are moving, touching and interacting with each others. According to Peck (2001) "children are usually in movement making something, holding something, moving their hands or walking somewhere" (p. 139). Thus, teachers need to vary their classes. Additionally,

⁵ My translation: "Mais que se divertir, nessas atividades seus alunos desenvolverão a linguagem, o pensamento, a criatividade, a iniciativa. Por meio de jogos e brincadeiras, as crianças aprendem a tomar decisões, a estabelecer relações de troca, a lidar com as regras, a resolver conflitos e a encontrar soluções para as suas dificuldades." (p.12)

teachers should remember that kids learn better by playing and experiencing things. From my personal view, teachers should use all kinds of strategies and materials in English classes. Teachers should use techniques, objects, games, and materials which are going to call kids' attention.

Reilly and Ward (1997) claim that "much of the learning will take place through play" (p.9). By the same token, when young learners play they are developing social, physical, motor, and intellectual factors, which are considered significant to the whole human process. According to Nogueira (2010), besides facilitating the learning process, ludic activities also stimulate students' curiosity.

Therefore, ludic activities are helpful in class because they motivate students to participate without fears of making mistakes. Vygotsky (1994) states that social interaction plays a crucial role in the development of cognition. Furthermore, learning an L2 happens because we interact with others and then we internalize meanings. Nogueira (2010) highlights that students have the opportunities to use the concepts which are taught by teachers, when they are performing a ludic activity. Therefore, the most teachers promote ludic activities the more learners will feel secure and stimulated to learn an L2.

In accordance to Vygotsky (1994), motivation is also a key factor when children are learning English. Based on Vygotsky's statements I attempt to suggest that if students feel motivated they will be interested in the subject and consequently they will learn faster. Thus, ludic activities are important pedagogical tools which promote interaction, help to establish social relations in the classroom; as a consequence students also will feel more motivated to learn.

According to Clark (2010), in order to develop an L1 or L2 children need to be exposed to a rich linguistic environment. Following this line of thought, it is crucial to

implement ludic activities in all L2 classes. Moreover, the use of playful activities presents a series of benefits. This idea can be verified in the following excerpt:

“Play is a way for children to extend their language abilities; it is where new vocabulary can be introduced as well as new ways to use it. It also allows children opportunities to express their point of view, solve disagreements, and persuade peers to work together. Language play has a focus on the very language elements that children will need to consider later when they learn about language” (p. 182).

Cook (2000) highlights that language play is part of us as human beings. The idea that all human beings play, that is children or adults, can be verified in the following excerpt: “Adults and children alike devote a large amount of time and thought to imaginary characters, situations, and events” (p. 35). Cook also summarized Huizinga’s ideas of play in his seminal work. “Play is: a free activity, conscious, outside ‘ordinary’ life, ‘not serious’, absorbing the player, bounded in time and space, rule governed, orderly, serving no material interest, profitless, promoting social grouping, and it has: a tendency to secrecy, a tendency to disguise, a faculty of repetition” (p. 112-113).

In accordance to Cook and Bacha (2010), “it is difficult to define what play is. Play varies among activities, social contexts, and age groups. Play might involve a game, but not always. Play can involve imagination, but it may also base itself on reality” (p. 3). Based on these assumption, teachers may include in their classes activities which motivate students in different contexts, such as: songs, poems, chants, rhymes, storytelling, dramatic activities, and games with a lot of gestures and movements. Therefore, the most important ludic activities are not just games they can be: stories, songs, games, puppets, masks, pictures, videos, posters, collages, and, even having a magic box in class.

Reilly and Ward (1997) suggest that teachers need to use songs, chants, rhymes, and music in order to promote children’s language development. This way students will repeat structures, notice the different sounds of the words, and have fun by dancing and acting out the song. Also, when students are doing an art or craft activity, they may receive from the

teacher comprehensible input. Other important ludic activity is telling stories to children. Young children always create a fantasy world. Sometimes they even invent imaginary friends. In stories you can ask children to predict and review facts.

Reilly and Ward (1997) show us that, “games help children to acquire language in the natural way that native speakers do” (p. 27). Therefore, in games children are supposed to use the language in a natural way. And the most important point they are enjoying what they are doing. Argondizzo (1992) divided children playing into three different types:

“Object play is reality-based and involves manipulation of and reference to the objects themselves. Fantasy play refers to episodes that evoke a fantastic or imaginative context and involves object substitution or the invocation of imaginary objects, similar to this is dramatic play which consists of a make-believe world in which children engage and invite others to participate” (p. 5).

Additionally, Cameron and McKay (2010) highlight several benefits of playing games in L2 classes. The benefits can be verified in the following excerpt:

“Playing games in the language classroom helps children to become motivated and to enjoy learning English. Competitive games also help children to develop skills in cooperating with each other and to be good losers. Team games help to avoid children feeling bad if they do not win since in team games, the focus is taken away from the individual, and winning and losing is a more gentle and manageable experience for the young player. It is important that children’s experience of learning English is as positive as possible, as they have many years of learning English ahead of them and we want them to stay motivated, not to give up early” (p. 32).

By the same token, Cook (2000) and Bacha (2010) confirm that music, games, and TPR activities constitute great activities in L2 learning. TPR games are activities in which children need to move or use their body. Vale and Feunten (1995) claim that the main purposes of TPR games are getting students motivated in following clear instructions, gaining confidence, understanding key elements, and developing group work among the students.

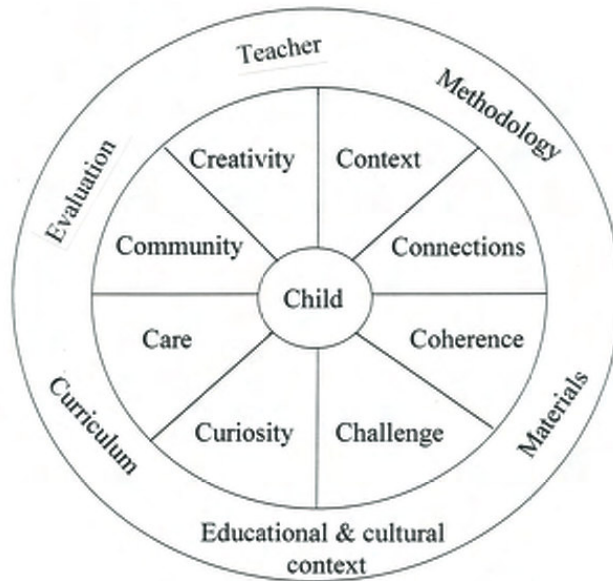
In brief, for Bacha (2010 apud Huizinga; 1955) play is a relevant activity in human beings’ life. There exist several kinds of playful activities. However, in order to be ludic, they need to deal with creativity and imagination.

“...all people play and all people have the ability to play. It is, however, difficult to define what play is. Play varies among activities, social contexts, and age groups. Play might involve a game, but not always. Play can involve imagination, but it may also base itself on reality. Play has many forms under its umbrella, including fantasy, story telling, music, movement, games, etc. Play almost always promotes excitement, enjoyment, and a relaxing atmosphere” (p. 3).

2.4 Ludicity and class preparation

One of the most important ways to motivate students in L2 classes is the use of ludic activities. Moreover, when teachers prepare ludic tasks they should have in mind how students are going to react by receiving this kind of activity. According to some authors, (Argondizzo, 1992; Cameron and McKay, 2010; Leventhal, 2006; Peck, 2001; Read, 1998; Reilly & Ward, 1997; Vale and Feunten, 1995) the activities also have to involve and motivate the whole classroom. Consequently, the activities have to be attractive and interesting. By the same token, the task should be prepared according to the students' language level, so they can express themselves in a comprehensible way and also practice more speaking. In order to obtain and maintain the young learners interests teachers need to plan classes using different tools. For instance, prepare a challenge class in which students will, listen to a story, play a game, do a worksheet, sing and dance.

According to Ellis and Read (1998), children learn best using the *C wheel* (Read, 1998). Based on the picture below it is easy to understand what teachers may take into consideration when they are going to prepare a class for children.

The 'C' wheel

© Carol Read

(<http://www.carolread.com/articles/Creative%20recipes%20for%20planning%20lessons%20CATS%20Spring06.pdf>)

Read (1998) states that when teaching young children teachers need to explain the rules, routines, and responsibilities of each student. Rules can be prepared by the teacher previously and imposed to students or even negotiated with the children. The rules will help to establish “clear boundaries for children” (p.8). Routines help children to feel secure and to get familiar with the class instructions. Responsibilities need to be well explained to students. If the classes have rules, routines and the teacher assigns responsibilities to students, the children will be more centered in their work and they may develop their independency more successfully.

In order to establish a positive and successful language learning environment with children, the activities selected for a class should be prepared carefully by the teacher. Based on this assumption, Read (1998) suggests that teachers need to pay more attention to children’s process because they tend to accelerate the process in order to get the product quickly. This happens when students take less time for performing the activities than the time the teacher planned. Teachers may promote motivating activities in which students feel pleasure as they are working on them.

It is equally important to model and encourage the whole class to participate. When teachers organize games that tend to be competitive they need to use this opportunity to develop students' co-operation instead of competition. It is also vital to prepare activities involving physical activities. When planning a class teachers need to select activities that involve students rather than just keeping learners busy. Finally, it is essential to remember that language development is part of children's cognitive development (Mckay, 2006).

Children like imaginative activities because they are curious. For this reason, they can create contexts, and also assimilate the meanings easily. Therefore, teachers who teach young learners need to prepare special activities for them. They have to prepare ludic activities in which children might play, touch, move, run, color, match, identify, listen, sing, explore, perform and interact with the whole class. Furthermore, teachers should study the syllabus and prepare ludic activities related to what is being studied in classes.

Therefore, the more teachers prepare challenging activities for children the more students are going to be motivated to study and participate. From my personal experience as a teacher, I notice that kids are always open to experiment and to do what is proposed. In games, for example, children talk a lot without fear of making mistakes. As a consequence, they are always interested and engaged in the activities and games proposed.

Literature in the field suggests that, preparing ludic classes, especially for kids, demands time effort, concentration, and creativity. For this reason, teachers have to keep in their mind that planning is one of the most important parts of L2 classes. If the class is well prepared and planned teachers may reach their objectives. According to Leventhal (2006), a class plan avoids improvisation; facilitates the learning process, promotes great results and gives the right direction to the teacher. These ideas can be verified in the following excerpt:

“If you are unsure where to go, you might end up going where you not wanted. Thus, the teacher has to determine what the student should be able to produce at the end of the learning process. This is called setting goals. If the teacher does not define the objectives, he/she can not evaluate objectively the result of his/her teaching activity and the educator is unable to choose the most appropriate teaching procedures ”⁶ (p. 24) .

Therefore, the ideas and suggestions about class preparation here discussed are based on Leventhal arguments and my personal experience as a teacher. When teachers are going to plan a class they need to have in mind some important issues such as:

- What are my objectives?
- What should students do?
- What materials am I going to use?
- What kind of activities are students going to perform?
- Am I preparing different activities so as to consider different learning styles?
- How long does each activity take?
- What is the best order of each activity?
- How may I link each activity to the other?
- How am I going to instruct my students?
- How am I going to prepare my students before the activity?
- How am I going to evaluate my students during the activities?

Secondly, when teachers are going to plan their classes, they always need to have the previous issues in mind. Thus, the teacher needs to specify the content and all the procedures. Teachers have to remember that students are different and they use different strategies to learn. So, when teachers prepare a class they have to be careful with activities. One suggestion is trying to prepare mixed abilities activities, in order to get all students’ attention.

⁶ My translation: “Se você não tem certeza para onde vai, pode acabar indo para onde não pretendia. Assim, o professor precisa determinar de início o que o aluno deverá ser capaz de produzir no final do aprendizado. A isso se chama de definir objetivos. Se o professor não define os objetivos, não pode avaliar de maneira objetiva o resultado de sua atividade de ensino e não tem condições de escolher os procedimentos de ensino mais adequados” (p. 24).

By the same token, young learners love and really participate when teachers use the ludic language or create rhymes, songs and mimes. As a result, children improve L2 naturally. Moreover, teachers have several sources which can help them to create other kinds of games. A series of examples of ludic activities can be seen on Appendix 1.

The next chapter presents the method employed so as to conduct the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This chapter aims at presenting the participants of the study and the method employed for data collection.

3.1 Participants

The participants of the present study were two English teachers from a private language school situated in Criciúma – Brazil. The teachers were named as T1 and T2. While T1 has been working for ten years as an English teacher, T2 has been working in the same school for five years. Both T1 and T2 have more than four years experience in L2 teaching to children. Moreover, they were chosen because they might have a deeper understanding of the methodological and pedagogical approaches to teach English to children. The students from T1 were about seven and eight years old. The students from T2 were 4 and 5 years old. T1 had a bigger group in the classroom. This group was formed by 13 students, 7 boys and 6 girls. On the other hand, T2 has a small group, 5 students, only boys.

3.2 Method of data collection

T1 and T2 teachers were required to answer a written questionnaire (see appendixes 2-3-4). After that, this researcher attended three classes of 60 minutes from T1 and three classes of 45 minutes from T2. Classes were observed and notes were taken by this researcher (see the class observation guide in appendix 5). Moreover, at the end of the class two students were selected at random so as to provide their feedback regarding the classes.

Based on the results of the qualitative questionnaire and on the class observation, it was conducted an analysis of the ludic activities that learners demonstrated greater enthusiasm and learning. The results were expected to provide important information regarding the use of ludic activities and suggest which ludic activities were more effective so as to help teachers to prepare better classes. The analysis also attempted to address the research questions of this study :

- 1) What do teachers do in order to motivate young learners in L2 classes?
- 2) What kinds of ludic activities do children enjoy the most?

3.3 The questionnaire

The questionnaire designed for this study contained 8 open-ended questions that aimed at providing important information regarding the use of ludic activities. It was written in Portuguese in order to ensure that target language would not affect the data collection purposes, which was to evaluate the use of ludic activities in L2 classes.

The first question had the objective to identify what kind of activities the students enjoy the most in L2 classes (1- Quais atividades você percebe que seus alunos desenvolvem ou participam com mais prazer durante as aulas de língua inglesa ?). The second question attempted to verify what activities students ask their teachers to perform and what perceptions the teacher had when learners asked them to repeat any activity. On the third question, this researcher aimed at verifying the teachers' knowledge about ludic activities in L2 classes. The fourth question had question had the objective of evaluating teachers' opinions about ludic activities in L2 classes. On the fifth question it was attempted to identify what activities are considered ludic by the teachers. The sixth question investigated the use of ludic activities. It also aimed at determining what kind of activities were used, how often they employed the

activities, and how they evaluated the use of ludic activities. On the seventh question I attempted to discover what kind of tools teachers use to prepare their classes. Finally, the final question aimed at verifying how teachers evaluated their student's interest and motivation during the English classes.

The next chapter presents the results of this investigation and the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discusses the results of the qualitative analyses carried out in order to answer the research questions addressed in the study: (1) What do teachers do in order to motivate young learners in L2 classes? (2) What kinds of ludic activities do children enjoy the most?

4.1 The qualitative analysis of data

Both T1 and T2 teachers answered a questionnaire with eight questions. In the first question *Quais atividades você percebe que seus alunos participam mais ativamente durante as aulas de língua inglesa?*, T1 highlighted the importance of interaction because her students participated more in activities in which they needed to interview each other, to find or to discover some information about their friends. She also pointed out that students participated actively when she worked with songs. T2, on the other hand, observed that her students participated more when they competed and played. According to T2, when students played games and performed other activities they could demonstrate that they are learning the language structures.

The analysis of data also demonstrated that students asked to perform and repeat activities in which they played or competed. According to T1, students always asked her to repeat bingos, memory games, relay race⁷, and other group activities. Learners also asked to work with songs because they liked listening to music in the classroom. T2 pointed out that

⁷ Relay race is a kind of game in which students are divided into two groups, the participants run in order to find something asked by the teacher.

students requested to perform games, because they are tools to motivate L2 learners to have fun and to compete.

However, the third question *Com relação ao ensino e aprendizagem da língua inglesa para crianças, o que você entende por atividades lúdicas?* revealed that most teachers had a somehow superficial view of ludic activities. T2, for instance, explained that ludic activities are just for playing and pleasure. On the other hand, T1 stated that these activities promoted interaction which consequently motivated very young learners' creativity and, imagination. Based on the answers provided by both T1 and T2 teachers, it might be assumed that the teachers' participants of the study do not possess a deeper knowledge concerning ludic activities.

Taking into the consideration the fourth question *Qual sua opinião sobre a utilização de atividades lúdicas para crianças nas aulas de Inglês?* both teachers believed that ludic activities had a positive impact on students' learning process. Another important point is that in ludic activities even shy students could participate because they wanted to do their best. As research has demonstrated (Argondizzo, 1992; Cameron and McKay, 2010; Leventhal, 2006; Peck, 2001; Read, 1998; Reilly & Ward, 1997; Vale and Feunten, 1995), there exist several kinds of activities which are considered ludic. Moreover, several objects and distinct tools may help teachers prepare a ludic class. Based on the answers, it was verified that all the teachers are able to implement a number of different ludic activities in their classes. All teachers, who participated in the study, have demonstrated the ability to use several activities such as: role play, acting out, games (in general), songs, bingo, memory games, guessing games, games that involve movement, magic finger (students listen and point in their books or on the board) activities with pictures, on the computer, on the e-board and movies.

Regarding the fifth question *Que tipo de atividades você considera lúdicas?* T1 considered that ludic activities are activities in which students should move such as: memory

games, activities on the board. She also claimed that these activities could be songs and activities with pictures. T2 highlighted that, ludic activities are the activities which motivate students' participation in classe. She cited games, role-play, and drama activities as ludic activities.

The analysis also showed that games and songs are the activities most used by the teachers. T1 argued that the use of ludic activities could be more frequent so that activities would motivate students to enjoy English. T1 stated that she tried to prepare a song worksheet once a week, memory games as always as possible, and activities on the internet e-board. T2 pointed out that ludic activities are important tools which help students to practice their speaking and also help the teacher to evaluate students' learning process. Her students always ask to perform games.

Concerning the question 7 *Que meios (recursos), você pesquisa ou utiliza na preparação de suas aulas?*, T1 has stated that on the internet teachers may find ideas, activities, and suggestions. T2 also cited the internet as an important source. She pointed out that attending courses and sharing ideas with other teachers are also important and useful in order to prepare ludic activities.

Moreover, students' interest and motivation are crucial in L2 classes. The participants know that the classes need to be interesting and attractive in order to motivate students. Thus, teachers agree that the more ludic the class is the more students are going to participate. T2 highlights that she always has in mind what motivates the students, this way ludic activities are extremely useful in classes.

4.2 What do teachers do in order to motivate young learners in L2 classes?

Concerning the first question addressed by the present research, results of the data analysis showed that teachers use games to motivate children in L2 classes. Some researchers intend to help teachers to prepare successful classes (Cameron, 2000; Leventhal, 2006; Peck, 2001; Reilly & Ward, 1997; Argondizzo, 1992; Vale & Feunteun, 1995; Cameron & McKay, 2010). Both T1 and T2 teachers proposed in their classes distinct ludic activities such as: songs, storytelling, written activities, and games with gestures and movements. In the classes observed, teachers also used the target language because they know how important is to provide input in the L2 so as to promote learners' output. Before applying the activities, the teachers usually contextualized the topics by using pictures, performing situations, singing songs, preparing and playing a game, even telling stories to get learners involved in the class and willing to participate.

In order to motivate children in L2 classes, teachers prepared ludic activities in which children played, touched, moved, ran, colored, matched, identified, listened, sang, explored, and performed. As cited previously, Cameron & McKay (2010) pointed out that, ludic activities stimulate and motivate kids to learn an L2. As a consequence, teachers should always study the syllabus and create ludic activities for their students. Results of the data analysis demonstrated that, both teachers had a general overview of the use and effectiveness of ludic activities. Ludic activities are not just games. Teachers need to find ways to prepare ludic activities from students' book that are interesting and fun. It just depends on how teachers prepare, instruct, and model the activity with the students.

4.3 What kinds of ludic activities do children enjoy the most?

Taking into account the second question and the data presented, the results suggested that children from the first group enjoyed more games in which they could play and compete. In this group, students did not like working with their books. Students said that the activities were boring. In the second group, students showed that they enjoyed games and stories. Both groups liked memory games, guessing games, songs, picture games (games in which students or teachers hide pictures) and bingo.

As cited previously in the review of literature research suggests that children are very active, that is, they like activities in which they move (Argondizzo, 1992; Cameron and Mckay, 2010; Leventhal, 2006; Peck, 2001; Read, 1998; Reilly & Ward, 1997; Vale and Feunten, 1995). They do not enjoy long activities. Successful activities for children should not take more than eight or ten minutes. If the activities are too long young learners will not be concentrated until the end of the activity. Children like imaginative activities because they are curious. For this reason, they can create contexts, and also assimilate the meanings easily. Therefore, results suggested that kids are always open to experiment and to do what is proposed. In both groups it was verified that, students were active and they needed to perform activities in which they moved around. Regarding timeframe, the shorter activities were more successful than the ones which took more than 10 minutes, with the exception of the bingo game.

The next chapter presents the concluding remarks obtained from the results of the present study, the limitations of the study, as well as some suggestions for further research in the field of L2 teaching and learning for children.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The objective of this chapter is to highlight the most important findings obtained in the research, which aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of ludic activities in L2 classes for young learners, and also investigated what kind of activities children enjoy the most. In addition, this chapter features the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Conclusions

The main objective of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of some ludic activities applied by English teachers in their classes for children. In this study, it was also investigated what teachers do in order to motivate students in L2 classes and evaluate what kinds of ludic activities children enjoy the most.

It is common knowledge that children learn better when they are motivated to do it. Thus, it is both crucial and challenging to provide an effective classroom environment in which children can learn without fears of making mistakes. Based on the classes attended, it can be pointed out that teachers created a favorable classroom environment in which children felt secure and comfortable to produce and learn. Teachers were children's friends, they showed interest in the classes, and were patient with students' attitudes.

Taking into account the analysis of data, this research may suggest that both teachers have a general overview of the use and the effectiveness of ludic activities. The classes were also prepared considering the mixed abilities, because in the same class students performed listening, speaking, reading and writing activities. Therefore, the more teachers prepare challenging activities for children the more students are going to be motivated to study and

participate. As a result, students are going to have more opportunities to experiment the real communication. The data showed that when teachers use ludic activities students get familiar with the language, feel more motivated to learn, and they automatically reproduce the language structures.

Considering the use of ludic activities, as Peck (2001) suggests, teachers tried to use several activities such as: songs, poems, chants, rhymes, storytelling, dramatic activities, and games with gestures and movements. Therefore, young learners love and really participate more when teachers use ludic language or create, rhymes, songs and mimes. As a result, children may improve their L2 oral ability. The use of games and songs was a positive aspect in the classes. In the study carried out, teachers prepared ludic activities having in mind the benefits and advantages of distinct activities. They also use ludic language to introduce new vocabulary, to review, to calm down and relax, to prepare students for another activity, to link one activity to another, and even make the book activities more pleasant to students.

Considering the classes and the teachers' opinions, it can also be suggested that teachers believe that games are the most successful ludic activities. In games children have the feeling that they are just having fun, but in fact they are learning and practicing the target language. According to T1, using games in which children need to move and compete are great suggestions in getting students focused and motivated in the classes. Teachers also highlighted the importance of songs and rhymes, that is, children love to play with the sounds of the language.

Finally, children also demonstrated that the activities they enjoy the most are games. In fact, games prompt students to compete and consequently to evaluate their learning. However, when teachers worked with songs and stories the students also participated.

Therefore, the most important findings obtained from data in terms of the research questions addressed by this study can be stated as:

→ Finding (1): teachers used distinct ludic activities (games, songs, stories) in order to motivate young learners in L2 classes.

→ Finding (2): taking into account the several kinds of ludic activities, children demonstrated that they enjoyed games the most.

→ Finding (3): the data demonstrated that ludic activities are considered effective pedagogical tools which need to be implemented in L2 classes for children.

→ Finding (4): teachers did not possess sufficient knowledge about ludic activities in L2 classes.

→ Finding (5): teachers performed activities in which students need to move around.

→ Finding (6): teachers believed that games are great activities that motivate children learning an L2

5.2 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

The present study was carried out to investigate what teachers do in order to motivate students in L2 classes and to evaluate the effectiveness of distinct ludic activities applied by English teachers in their classes for young learners. As an exploratory and tentative study, the present investigation takes into account a series of limitations and suggestions for further research:

1. Sample Size: the results of the study can not be generalized to the sample size investigated. That is to say that, further studies in the field should strive to involve a greater number of participants in order to provide findings that could be stated more strongly.
2. Number of classes observed: the number of the classes observed by this researcher was somehow limited. In order to get more consistent results the number of classes observed should be greater.

3. Lack of systematic studies in the field: a great deal of research still needs to be conducted so as to unravel the use of ludic activities in L2 classes for children. Considering the use of ludic activities there is not enough empirical research in the field of teaching English to young learners.

4. Concerning the differences between the groups: the fact that participants from group B were just boys could have influenced the results provided by this investigation. Further research should strive to obtain participants in which both groups would provide similar features as regards gender and age range.

Despite the limitations presented above, it is hoped that this study opens an avenue of inquiry into the effects of ludic activities in L2 classes, as well as into the field of teaching and learning English to young learners. As a consequence, it is expected that the present investigation provides an invaluable contribution to teachers' theoretical and practical knowledge as regards teaching English to children.

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<http://www.english-4kids.com/games.html>

<http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/>

APPENDIX 1: SUGGESTIONS OF LUDIC ACTIVITIES

- **Story-telling:** this kind of activity is used a lot by young learners' teachers; teachers tell a story to the students using pictures, realia, flashcards or even the internet. In this activity teachers may use the target language and encourage learners to repeat the sentences and actions. At the end teachers can also ask questions about the story. Teachers may create settings and let students acting out the stories. (Adapted from: Cookie and Friends)
- **Chinese whisper:** students make a circle on the floor and the teacher whisper a word or a sentence to one of them, this student whispers the same word or sentence to the next one and so on. The last student says the word out loud. (Adapted from: Hello)
- **Board memory game:** teachers place some cards on the board, then ask to the students to close their eyes, during this moment the teacher hides a card, finally the teacher asks to the students to open their eyes and to guess what card is missing. (Adapted from: <http://www.esl-kids.com/eslgames/eslgames.html>)
- **Clap game:** this is a very nice game to work with listening comprehension. In this game the teacher gives instructions such as: "students when I say a number you give 1 clap and when I say a color you give 2 claps. (Adapted from: Ingles é10!)"
- **Simon says:** students are supposed to do what the teacher asks, for example: "clap your hands / jump twice..." (Adapted from: <http://genkienglish.net/games.htm>)
- **Masks:** children love to create characters for them. This is also a good way to explore the animals; students can talk about their favorite pets and to contextualize the story. (Adapted from: <http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/>)

- **Feeling game / guessing game:** the teacher puts some objects in a bag and asks to the students to pick up something to feel it and try to guess. (Adapted from: Inglês é 10! O ensino de Inglês na Educação Infantil)
- **Mime game:** they really love this kind of activity. One student mimes and the other students have to guess it. The teacher can also prepare some cards of things they have to mime, and divide the class into two groups. (Adapted from: Inglês é 10! O ensino de Inglês na Educação Infantil)
- **Songs and rhymes:** to contextualize them with pictures and to create an easy choreography. Teachers may also prepare activities in which children need to identify specific items they listened in the song. (Adapted from: Inglês é 10! O ensino de Inglês na Educação Infantil / <http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/>)
- **Videos or pieces of movies:** are great tools to explore a content (warm-up or review); (Adapted from: <http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/>)
- **Puppets:** use puppets to create a story; or also to tell the story. Other idea is to make the puppets with them. (Ask their help students are great helpers they love to help specially the teacher). (Adapted from: Inglês é 10! O ensino de Inglês na Educação Infantil)
- **Pictures games:** the teacher brings a colorful bag to the class and tells to the students that in the bag are many different pictures. Each student takes out a picture from the bag and the teachers asks some questions: “What’s this? / What color is it? / Is it big or small?” This activity is very nice to introduce and review structures or vocabulary. (Adapted from: Inglês é 10! O ensino de Inglês na Educação)
- **Book game:** the teacher asks to the students to open their books on a specific page, then, the teacher starts to say some things children have to find on the page, when they found it they point and call out “I found it”. (Adapted from: Cookie and Friends)

- **Bingo:** it can be played with each content you can build the cards with your students it is more productive than bring the cards ready. (Adapted from: Inglês é 10! O ensino de Inglês na Educação Infantil)
- **Hot potato:** you have to put some objects in a box, students sit in a circle on the floor, the teacher plays the CD when the music stops the student who is holding the box he/she opens it and picks up something and says its name. (Adapted from: Cookie and Friends)
- **The magic box:** have a box in the class and explain to the students that it is magic each class new objects or pictures appeared in the box. This is a way to show to the students how they are learning. (Adapted from: Cookie and Friends)
- **Line game:** you can draw a line on the floor and tell to the students that one side is called the side A and the other the side B. explain them that each side corresponds a category of words, for example: A= numbers and B= animals. You can prepare the words before or you can organize the pictures and show it, this way students need to say the name of what they see and jump to the right side. (Yazigi teachers' creation)
- **Fruit salad:** ask to each student to bring a different fruit to the classroom and prepare a fruit salad with student's help. You can also prepare others snacks especially when they are learning about foods. Cooking classes are great experiences and students participate showing much interest. (Adapted from: Inglês é 10! O ensino de Inglês na Educação Infantil)
- **Spy game:** I spy with my eyes something red...then students run to put their hands on something red. The teacher starts the game, and then let the students to say the sentence. (Adapted from: <http://genkienglish.net/games.htm>)

- **Make posters or collages;** these are great activities to introduce new language and review vocabulary. (Adapted from: Inglês é 10! O ensino de Inglês na Educação Infantil)
- **Fishing game:** in the classroom you can create a river and put fishes with numbers and colors tell to the students that they are going to fish. When they catch a fish ask them: 'Lucas what did you fish? Is it a color or a number? It's number 1' (Wanda and Márcia's creation)
- **Action Race:** This is a fun game using actions. Use actions like jump, hop, clap, run etc. Divide students in two teams and sit them in lines with a chair by each team and one chair at the other end of the room. One student from each team stands next to their chair and teacher calls an action, e.g. "Jump". Students need jump to the chair on the other side of the room and back, sitting down in their chair saying "I can jump". The first to do it gets a point to the team. (Adapted from: <http://www.esl-kids.com/eslgames/eslgames.html>)
- **Pass the ball:** Have all students sit in a circle. Use a ball and pass it to one student. But you need to say one English word as you pass the ball. The student throws the ball to another student and says a different English word. If the student you threw it to drops it, he/she is out. And the game keeps going until you have one winner. It can be played with different categories, such as Food, Animals, Etc. (Adapted from: <http://www.esl-kids.com/eslgames/eslgames.html>)
- **Race:** It is basically a QUIZ game in which you ask children questions (Target Vocabulary) like: "What's this? What fruit is red and round? How many chairs are there in the classroom?" or the teacher draws items on the board, makes animal noises so that they guess. They will approach the Goal line as they answer each question.

Each right answer equals a step towards the Goal Line. The student, who arrives there first, is the winner. (Adapted from: <http://www.esl-kids.com/eslgames/eslgames.html>)

- **Board Scramble:** the teacher puts the whole alphabet on the blackboard in a scramble of letters here and there, but low enough that the students can reach it. Have two teams and call out a letter. The person that is able to find and circle it first wins a point for their team. To make things harder have capital and small letters. Even more challenging- have four teams all looking for the same letter. The kids just love it. You can do it with numbers and also words. (Adapted from: <http://www.esl-kids.com/eslgames/eslgames.html>)
- **Colors in the Air:** This is good for very young ones. Give each student 2 pieces of different colored paper. The teacher calls out a color (e.g. "Blue") and the students with that color hold it up. (Adapted from: <http://www.esl-kids.com/eslgames/eslgames.html>)
- **Number Group Game:** Play some music and have your Ss walk around the classroom. Stop the music suddenly and call out a number (up to the number of Ss in your class). The Ss must quickly get together in a group of that number. Any Ss who didn't make it sit out until the next round. (Adapted from: <http://www.esl-kids.com/eslgames/eslgames.html>)
- **Odd-One-Out:** Write 3 or four words on the board. Students need to circle the odd-one-out (e.g. cat - horse - cake - bird). You can do this activity using pictures too. (Adapted from: <http://www.esl-kids.com/eslgames/eslgames.html>)
- **Modeling clay:** this is very important for doing the objects they are studying and it also motivates their imagination.
- **Treasure Hunt:** before the class teachers should hide some objects or pictures in the classroom. Prepare some tips which you are going to read in order to the students to

find the treasure. Divide the class into two groups and tell them that they have to find a treasure, explain what kind of treasure it is. Give them some suggestions where they can find the first tip. When they found the first tip they are going to have the second and so on until they get the treasure. (Adapted from: <http://www.esl-kids.com/eslgames/eslgames.html>)

- **Spelling Bee:** Have all your students stand at the front of the class. Give to each student a word to spell. The student orally spells the word and the teacher writes it on the board as it is being spelt. If the spelling is wrong the student is out of the game. The last student standing is the winner. This also works well as a team game. (Adapted from: <http://www.esl-kids.com/eslgames/eslgames.html>)
- **Spin the Bottle:** Sit all students in a circle with a bottle in the middle. The teacher spins the bottle. When it stops spinning the student it is pointing to has to answer a question. If the answer is correct then, that student can spin the bottle. This is a good class warm up activity. (Adapted from: <http://www.esl-kids.com/eslgames/eslgames.html>)
- **Touch:** Have students run around the classroom touching things that you order them to do (e.g. "Touch the table" "Touch a chair" "Touch your bag"). Colors work well for this, as students can touch anything of that color (e.g. "Touch something green").
- **Zoo Game:** This is a fun activity for young learners on the topic of animal noises. After teaching the animals and their noises sit each student in a different part of the classroom and assign them as different animals (to make it clearer you can give each student a flashcard of the animal they are representing). Walk around the room and talk to each student, who can only reply as an animal. E.g. T: "Hello Tom!", S1: "Moo! (cow). T: "What's your name?" S2: "Roar!" (lion). T: "How are you,

Kenta?" S3: "Bow-wow!" (dog). (Adapted from: <http://www.esl-kids.com/eslgames/eslgames.html>)

- **Hangman:** you can divide the class in two groups. Select some vocabulary they are studying and let students guess the words. (Adapted from: Very young learners)
- **Kim's game:** choose five flashcards. Put the cards on the board in a line where the children can see them. Chant the words in order. Turn all the flashcards over to face the board. Turn over four of the flashcards and see if the children can tell you which one is still facing down. Repeat a number of times. After a while leave two facing the board. Continue the procedure until all the cards are facing down and see if the children can remember them. (Adapted from: Cookie and Friends)
- **Memory games:** teachers may create pairs of cards about the vocabulary students are studying. Students sit on the floor in a circle, each player has to take two cards and try to find a pair. The winner is who has more pairs. It is a great idea to review, memorize and practice all kind of vocabularies or structures. (Adapted from: Inglês é 10! O ensino de Inglês na Educação Infantil)
- **Puzzles:** students can create their puzzles or the teacher can bring to the class a puzzle and the student need to organize and discover what is the picture about. This is a great idea to introduce a new content. (Adapted from: Bringing creative teaching into the young learner classroom)
- **Find someone who...:** in this activity students are suppose to find a person who likes something according to what the teacher asked. It can be an oral or written activity. For example: find someone who likes bananas / find someone who is wearing a blue T-shirt. (Adapted from: <http://www.esl-kids.com/eslgames/eslgames.html>)
- **Relay race:** the teacher places many pictures on the board or on the wall in the classroom. Divide students in groups and form lines facing the board. The teacher

calls out a word and the first students from the lines need to run and find the picture asked by the teacher. The student who finds the picture first gets a point for his/her group.

- **Spot the difference:** divide students in smalls groups. Give them two similar drawings, and then students need to find, show and explain to their classmates the differences. (Adapted from: Bringing creative teaching into the young learner classroom)
- **Please Mr. Crocodile:** organize a place in the classroom and place “the water” on the floor. The teacher is the crocodile and stays in the middle of the water. Children may ask permission to cross the river by asking: Please, Mr. Crocodile can I cross the river? The crocodile answers: Yes, only if you are wearing blue. The student who is wearing that color crosses the river. (Adapted from: <http://www.esl-kids.com/eslgames/eslgames.html> / Very young learners)
- **Freeze:** a good game to practice numbers. Choose a child-leader, this child is going to face the wall and starts to count the numbers when he / she says “freeze” he /she turns around and checks if anyone is moving. The student who moves need to answer a question made by the teacher and then he / she is the leader. (Adapted from: Children in action: a resource book for language teachers of Young learners)
- **Stop:** the teacher plays a song and students move and dance in the classroom. When the teacher stops the song students need to stop without moving. The student who moves first helps answers a question made by the teacher, now he/she helps the teacher to observe who is the next to move. . (Adapted from: Children in action: a resource book for language teachers of Young learners)

- **Chair dance:** the teacher organizes the chairs in a circle in the classroom according to the number of the students. Then the teacher calls out a sentence for instance: I can play soccer. The students who can do that activity need to change their places, as the teacher is going to find a place another student stays without a chair to sit, thus he/she has to say another statement. . (Adapted from: Children in action: a resource book for language teachers of Young learners)

**APPENDIX 2 – MODEL OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ANSWERED BY THE
TEACHERS**



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SETOR DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO *LATO SENSU*

ESPECIALIZAÇÃO EM LÍNGUA INGLESA

ALUNA: MÁRCIA MAURER SCARPARI

Caro professor,

Você está participando de uma pesquisa que investiga diversos aspectos relacionados ao ensino da língua inglesa para crianças. Este estudo está sendo realizado como requisito para a conclusão do curso de pós-graduação *LATO SENSU*, em língua inglesa, da aluna Márcia Maurer Scarpari, sob a orientação da professora Lisiane Rossi. A sua participação é de extrema importância, contribuindo dessa forma, com estudos realizados na área de aprendizagem e ensino da língua inglesa. É fundamental enfatizar que sua participação nesse estudo é anônima.

Obrigada

1) Quais atividades você percebe que seus alunos participam mais ativamente durante as aulas de língua inglesa ?

2) Os seus alunos pedem para você fazer determinadas atividades? Quais? Por que você acha que eles pedem para repetir atividades?

3) Com relação ao ensino e aprendizagem da língua inglesa para crianças, o que você entende por atividades lúdicas ?

4) Qual sua opinião sobre a utilização de atividades lúdicas para crianças nas aulas de Inglês?

5) Que tipo de atividades você considera lúdicas?

6) Você utiliza atividades lúdicas nas suas aulas?

Sim

não

Se a sua resposta for afirmativa, responda todas as próximas questões. Se a sua resposta for negativa, responda somente as questões 7 e 8.

6.a) Quais as atividades lúdicas que você mais utiliza nas suas aulas? Com que frequência você as utiliza?

6.b) Como você avalia o uso das atividades lúdicas citadas nas suas aulas?

7) Que meios (recursos), você pesquisa ou utiliza na preparação de suas aulas?

8) Em termos de interesse e motivação como você avalia a participação dos alunos durante as suas aulas?

APPENDIX 3 – T1 ANSWERS



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Obrigada

1) Quais atividades você percebe que seus alunos participam mais ativamente durante as aulas de língua inglesa ?

R.: Atividades em que eles têm que entrevistar uns aos outros e atividades com música.

2) Os seus alunos pedem para você fazer determinadas atividades? Quais? Por que você acha que eles pedem para repetir atividades?

R.: Sim. A maioria pede para trabalhar música. Em relação à música, acredito que seja pelo fato de eles gostarem de ouvir e curtir também fora da sala de aula. Os games como: memory game, relay race, etc.

3) Com relação ao ensino e aprendizagem da língua inglesa para crianças, o que você entende por atividades lúdicas ?

R.: Todas as atividades que promovem a interação e que instigam a imaginação e criatividade das crianças.

4) Qual sua opinião sobre a utilização de atividades lúdicas para crianças nas aulas de Inglês?

R.: Fundamental para a motivação. As crianças aprendem brincando.

5) Que tipo de atividades você considera lúdicas?

R.: Atividades que contem desenhos, figuras, atividades com música, exercícios em que eles tem que usar a inteligência espacial, como memory games, atividades no quadro.

6) Você utiliza atividades lúdicas nas suas aulas?

(X) Sim

() não

Se a sua resposta for afirmativa, responda todas as próximas questões. Se a sua resposta for negativa, responda somente as questões 7 e 8.

6.a) Quais as atividades lúdicas que você mais utiliza nas suas aulas? Com que frequência você as utiliza?

R.: Músicas com adolescentes, uma vez por semana. Memory games, sempre que possível. Atividades na internet ou no quadro digital, de vez em quando.

6.b) Como você avalia o uso das atividades lúdicas citadas nas suas aulas?

R.: Acho que poderiam ser mais frequentes. A ludicidade motiva e instiga o aluno a gostar ainda mais do Inglês.

7) Que meios (recursos), você pesquisa ou utiliza na preparação de suas aulas?

R.: A internet é uma fonte inesgotável de pesquisa. Idéias e atividades prontas.

8) Em termos de interesse e motivação como você avalia a participação dos alunos durante as suas aulas?

R.: Quanto mais lúdica é a aula, mais motivados os alunos ficam.

APPENDIX 4 – T2 ANSWERS



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ALUNA: MÁRCIA MAURER SCARPARI

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Obrigada

1) Quais atividades você percebe que seus alunos participam mais ativamente durante as aulas de língua inglesa ?

R.: Quando eu faço atividades das quais os meus alunos possam competir e brincar. São os momentos que eles se soltam mais e mostram que estão aprendendo a matéria.

2) Os seus alunos pedem para você fazer determinadas atividades? Quais? Por que você acha que eles pedem para repetir atividades?

R.: Sim, o que eles mais pedem para fazer são os games, porque são divertidos, competitivos e motivam os alunos a participar cada vez mais.

3) Com relação ao ensino e aprendizagem da língua inglesa para crianças, o que você entende por atividades lúdicas ?

R.: São atividades que despertam nos alunos um sentimento de brincadeira e diversão.

4) Qual sua opinião sobre a utilização de atividades lúdicas para crianças nas aulas de Inglês?

R.: Atividades lúdicas são muito válidas nas aulas de Inglês porque dão oportunidades para todos os alunos, mesmo aqueles que são mais tímidos e não gostam muito de falar, mas que em um jogo se esforçam para fazer o melhor.

5) Que tipo de atividades você considera lúdicas?

R.: Algumas atividades que motivam a participação dos alunos são os games, role-play e teatralização.

6) Você utiliza atividades lúdicas nas suas aulas?

(X) Sim

() não

Se a sua resposta for afirmativa, responda todas as próximas questões. Se a sua resposta for negativa, responda somente as questões 7 e 8.

6.a) Quais as atividades lúdicas que você mais utiliza nas suas aulas? Com que frequência você as utiliza?

R.: Os meus alunos me pedem muito os jogos, então sempre que eu quero revisar a matéria ou até mesmo praticar uma matéria nova eu preparo um game e isso acontece com bastante frequência.

6.b) Como você avalia o uso das atividades lúdicas citadas nas suas aulas?

R.: São importantes recursos que ajudam os alunos a falarem e praticarem o speaking e também me auxiliam no acompanhamento do aprendizado e da produção oral dos meus alunos.

7) Que meios (recursos), você pesquisa ou utiliza na preparação de suas aulas?

R.: nos cursos que faço, aprendemos muito sobre a importância do lúdico e de como preparar as atividades lúdicas, também trocando idéias com os colegas de trabalho e na internet.

8) Em termos de interesse e motivação como você avalia a participação dos alunos durante as suas aulas?

R.: Com certeza o interesse, a motivação e a participação dos alunos é muito maior quando eu preparo as minhas aulas pensando no que os deixaram mais estimulados, com vontade de participar. Por este motivo que as atividades lúdicas não podem faltar nas minhas aulas.

APPENDIX 5 – OBSERVATION GUIDE USED BY THE RESEARCHER



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ESPECIALIZAÇÃO EM LÍNGUA INGLESA

ALUNA: MÁRCIA MAURER SCARPARI

CLASS OBSERVATION GUIDE

➤ **Group characteristics (age, number of students):**

➤ **Activities applied in the class:**

➤ **Materials used in the class:**

➤ **Students' participation and attitudes:**

Students' opinions about the class (after the class):

APPENDIX 6 – CLASS OBSERVATION NOTES BASED ON THE CLASSROOM OBSERVATION GUIDE

CLASS OBSERVATION GUIDE (T1 FIRST CLASS)

➤ **Group characteristics (age, number of students):**

Students are 8 and 9 years old. There are 13 students in the classroom. It is a big group some students seem to be more talkative than others. However, this is a very creative group they always try to use the language they are learning.

➤ **Activities applied in the class:**

Memory game on the e-board, extra activity in which they are supposed to create a monster using pictures from magazines, homework in their books

➤ **Materials used in the class:**

e-board, papers, magazines, scissors, glues and colored pens;

➤ **Students' participation and attitudes:**

Students participated a lot in the first game showing a lot of competition. Some of them showed their oral production more because they are less shy than the others and more talkative.

Students' opinions about the class (after the class):

At the end of the class I asked to a boy and a girl their opinion about the class, both answered: "The game was wonderful"

CLASS OBSERVATION GUIDE (T1 SECOND CLASS)

➤ **Activities applied in the class:**

Listening activities, reading and writing.

➤ **Materials used in the class:**

CD, book and slips of paper with the conversation and the song.

➤ **Students' participation and attitudes:**

They were supposed to listening a conversation and organize it according to what they listened. It was a story from their books, this way they get concentrated and understand the story better after the story, the teacher distribute a worksheet with a song, then she explained that they need to listen carefully in order to fill in the spaces with the missing words explored before in the story.

Students' opinions about the class (after the class):

They had fun, because in the first activity they worked in two groups, so they did a kind of competition. They loved to fill in the blanks with the missing words, because they enjoyed the song, they sang the song together.

CLASS OBSERVATION GUIDE (T1 THIRD CLASS)

➤ **Activities applied in the class:**

Games to explore the vocabulary just learned through reading, writing and listening practice.

➤ **Materials used in the class:**

Slips of paper, and the activity board.

➤ **Students' participation and attitudes:**

They were supposed to look at the board and choose 6 of the sixteen sentences written. After that, they played hot sit. In this activity after choose the sentences one student stays standing up, this student reads a sentence and the other students who has chose that sentence should change their place, they could not seat on the same place. On the second activity they played Chinese whisper also using the sentences they chose before.

➤ **Students' opinions about the class (after the class):**

They had fun, because the activities evolved movement and competition.

CLASS OBSERVATION GUIDE (T2 FIRST CLASS)

➤ **Group characteristics (age, number of students):**

The students are about four and five years old. There are five boys in the classroom. Students seem to enjoy learning English

➤ **Activities applied in the class:**

Memory game, tic-tac-toe, guessing game, playing darts

➤ **Materials used in the class:**

Flashcards, memory game, e-board

➤ **Students' participation and attitudes:**

The teacher starts the class by greeting students and singing a hello song. After they reviewed the words related to food using some flashcards. Then they played a memory game prepared by the teacher previously. As they turned a card they always say the name of the food and the teacher asks if they like that food. When they finished she showed a tic-tac-toe on the e-board, and separated students into two groups. They chose a food and the teacher asked a question about it. In the next activity she asked to one student to go out the classroom and the other students choose a food item to hide, and when the student come back he/she should guess the name of the item by spying a piece of the picture. In the last activity the teacher reviewed all the vocabulary studied in three units, using the darts game students played the dart if they got it they get 1 point and could try 1 more point by taking a card from the flashcards and say the name of the picture.

Students' opinions about the class (after the class):

As it was a review class and the teacher used a lot of games I could realize that students get motivated and exited to play and participate in all the activities.

CLASS OBSERVATION GUIDE (T2 SECOND CLASS)

➤ **Activities applied in the class:**

Students reviewed the subjects studied using the kit cards as a guessing game, after that they matched the names with the pictures on their books.

➤ **Materials used in the class:**

Kit cards and the student's book.

➤ **Students' participation and attitudes:**

Students were very enthusiastic on participating and trying to say the vocabularies correctly.

Students' opinions about the class (after the class):

Students were very happy on counting how many cards they guessed and they asked the teacher to play again next time.

CLASS OBSERVATION GUIDE (T2 THIRD CLASS)

➤ **Activities applied in the class:**

Students reviewed some foods vocabularies as chocolate, apple, banana and ice-cream. After that, they made a cake coloring, cutting and building their cakes with the foods they have already studied.

➤ **Materials used in the class:**

Flashcards, xerox, colored pencils, scissors and glues.

➤ **Students' participation and attitudes:**

Students were very excited on building their own cakes. First the teacher reviews the language using the flashcards. Then she remembered children that Cookie in the story made a cake and know it was student's time to make a cake. So, they colored, they cut and they build their own cake and after they showed it to their classmates.

Students' opinions about the class (after the class):

Students liked the activity very much because it was different, they had fun and they would give the cake to a family member.

APPENDIX 7 – DESCRIPTION OF THE CLASSES OBSERVED

Three classes were observed with T1 teacher. On September, 28th the researcher attended the first class. The other two classes were observed on October, 04th, and 06th. The classes took place twice a week and each class lasted 60 minutes. The group consisted of thirteen students, seven boys and six girls who were between 7-8 years old. In this group students were very interested, creative, willing to participate, and they also seemed to be motivated. In the same group, some students were very competitive. Students showed effective listening skills. The girls were very participative and helpful, but the boys liked to complain that everything was boring. In fact, boys just wanted to play games.

During the first class I attended, students performed different activities with distinct objectives. They were studying the body parts and personal characteristics. The first activity proposed by the teacher was a memory game on the e-board. In this activity, students were divided into two groups, and each group had to choose two numbers, if the group found a pair they got a point. Thus, students were very concentrated and willing to participate.

After the game the teacher gave to each student a paper in which they were supposed to draw a monster face and use pictures from magazines in order to participate in a contest in which teachers would choose the best face. Before starting the teacher showed them some examples of monster faces on the e-board (a face with three eyes, two noses, long hair). During this activity students felt very excited with the contest. Finally, the teacher wrote on the board “homework”, and asked students to find their activity books.

It could be observed that students had a great interest and motivation through the games they played and the drawing they were supposed to create. They just wanted to play and move around in the class. However, the games proposed by the teacher in that class helped the students to learn the structures and new vocabulary in a favorable environment.

In the second class observed, the T1 organized a different way to tell them a story. She tipped the story previously and cut it in pieces. In the class she organized students in groups of three and two and gave to each one a complete part. Children were supposed to listen to the story and organize it according to what they had listened. During the activity students again wanted to compete. They were concentrated and understood the story because all the groups wanted to finish first. After this activity the teacher distributed a worksheet with a song. Then, she explained that they should listen carefully in order to fill in the spaces with the missing words explored before in the story. (This activity was very nice because they did it individually.) And after the teacher divided students into two groups and they sang the song.

In the third class, the teacher reviewed some sentences they studied in the unit. First, she wrote on the board the sentences, and then she asked them to choose 6 sentences and wrote them down on a piece of paper provided previously. After that, she explained the game named “hot seat” to them (See explanation of the game on appendix 1). In this activity, after choosing the sentences, one student read a sentence and the other students who had chosen that sentence should change their place, they could not seat on the same place. On the second activity, in this class they played Chinese whisper also using the sentences they chose before. In this class students did not write on their books, they just played with the language.

In the second group, students were younger than in the first one. There were five boys who were between 4-5 years old. The three classes were observed on October, 5th, 7th, and 14th. The classes took place twice a week and each class lasted 45 minutes. The teacher used a lot of visual materials and she also tried to speak English all the time, making a lot of gestures.) Students in the group were willing to participate and could understand the purpose of the activities. During the class the teacher had the feeling to change the activity when learners did not show much interest, because as they are very young they did not get concentrated much time on the same activity. By the same token, the teacher used a lot the e-

board in order to contextualize, show pictures, and work with listening comprehension. (Moreover, e-boards are great pedagogical tools to use for this age.) I could realize that among all the activities performed by learners they enjoyed most to use the e-board and acting out activities they need go around or find something.

In this class students showed greater enthusiasm and did not feel tired. The first activity performed was singing hello. After that, the teacher gave back to students their homework and each one chose a sticker to paste on it. Then, the teacher showed the homework for next class. She asked what they could see. They answered: “geladeira”, then the teacher interfered: “How do you say geladeira in English?” one of the learners said: “fridge”. Then the teacher continued asking questions if they could see any food in the fridge until the students could understand that they were supposed to draw food in the fridge.

After students understood the homework they played a food memory game in order to review the food items they had learnt previously. As they were playing the memory game, the teacher always asked them if they liked or did not like the food. When they finished the memory game she showed a tic-tac-toe on the e-board, and separated students into two groups. They chose the food and the teacher asked a question about it. In the next activity she asked one student to go out the classroom and the other students choose a food item to hide, and when the student came back he/she needed to guess the name of the item by spying a piece of the picture. In the last activity the teacher reviewed all the vocabulary studied in three units. It was observed that students were enjoying the class because they participated in all the activities proposed.

In the second class, students reviewed the language related to food, clothes, body parts, animals and numbers. First, the teacher started with a guessing game. After students organized the cards according to the groups they belonged to. Then the teacher distributed the

worksheet from their books and she asked them to match the items according to the group they belonged to. Students also counted the numbers of items they could remember the names.

In the third class in this group, the teacher hid some pictures about food in the class. When the students arrived, the teacher asked them to find the pictures and bring them to her. She called students' attention that the pictures were the same Cookie (a character from their book) used to make a cake. So, she reviewed the story with them. After that, students colored the cake, cut, and built their own cakes. At the end of the class they presented their cake to their friends and took it home. Students were very excited on building their own cakes.