

# **“PicBook App”: Enhancing Early EFL Reading Comprehension in Young Learners**

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Bachelor’s Degree in Spanish and English

Bogotá, Colombia 2023

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to take a moment to express my heartfelt appreciation to the amazing people who have supported and guided me throughout this project. Your unbreakable belief in me and your continuous encouragement have made all the difference.

To my advisor Johana Montaña and all of the teachers who contributed to my professional development, I am deeply grateful for your guidance, patience, and expertise. Your mentorship has shaped me as a teacher and your invaluable insights have pushed me to go above and beyond. Thank you for your support and the way you push me to do my best.

To my family, thank you for your immense love and support. Life won't be long enough to thank and reward you all for your immense love. I dedicate this work to my family, especially, to Lola who was by my side constantly. Thank you for always being there, cheering me on, and reminding me of my strengths.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Reading comprehension is an important skill that must be developed during the course of education. Early development of this ability will serve as a solid foundation for overcoming reading challenges in the future, especially in a world where technological advancements are causing such rapid change. This project aims to develop a pedagogical and didactic innovation proposal to improve early EFL reading comprehension skills in young learners. The "PicBook App" was designed as a tool that integrates technology and picture books for promoting learners' abilities in an interactive way. It also combines rich visual elements with leveled reading text, that is customized to the needs and skills of the target population, learners in Colombian public institutions between the ages of six and eight. The project adopted a blended learning approach strategy to maximize the learning potential by mixing traditional and digital pedagogies while giving parents a role as facilitators of their children's learning process. The project was founded on the theoretical framework of reading comprehension, considering the principles of interactive reading and its integration with technology. This innovative approach presents an alternative viewpoint on the potential of ICTs as a pedagogical instrument to enhance early EFL readers' comprehension abilities.

**Keywords:** Early Reading comprehension, Interactive reading, picture books, ICTs in education, blended learning.

## **CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM**

### **Context – Target population**

The current proposal was designed for first grade students who are considered very young learners in an official educational institution in Bogotá. Due to the previous year's COVID-10 health emergency, it was not possible to perform an in-depth observation of the students in order to propose an action research project, as a result, the proposal was transformed into an innovative pedagogical project. However, a preliminary diagnosis of the target population was made at Instituto Pedagógico Nacional, an institution designated as an official and special regime, it belongs to the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional rather than the territorial entity in which it is located. It's located in Usaquén, a locality in the north of Bogota, although this is a proposal that can be applied to any public institution. The participants in this diagnosis were 22 students from first grade, 11 of whom were boys, and the remaining 11 students were girls. Therefore, the population for this proposal belonged to the early childhood age range, as they were between 6 and 8 years old.

As the starting point to characterize the population, observations were made to recognize first-graders. The first stage revealed some important aspects about these students including their cognitive, socio-emotional and educational characteristics. These students are active learners; it means that they show enthusiasm by welcoming the teacher in English as soon as she enters the classroom, and they participate in the teacher's class activities. Likewise, this group has good interpersonal relationships. They talk a lot among them, and they are used to sharing their books and resources with their classmates if they need them. They also support each other, creating a collaborative environment that promotes peer learning. On the other hand, it will be challenging to pay attention to everyone at once because there are 20 students in this group, which is fewer

than the average at public school class size of 25 students according to data published by La República (2022). Additionally, the English class frequency is 4 hours weekly. Although these characteristics have a positive implication, they could make the learning more challenging because they are too talkative and easily distracted by an internal and external factor already mentioned.

Another key point is to characterize the teaching and learning processes during early childhood, it is important to consider that both biological and environmental factors can have an impact on children's learning process. Tassoni (2016) claims that a child's growth during these years must be holistic in terms of physical, emotional, social, communicative, language, and aesthetic domains. Hence, language learning instruction cannot only be focused on one domain. In addition, Piaget (1971) proposes the theory of cognitive development which discusses the nature and development of human intelligence. This theory examines the nature of knowledge and how humans gradually acquire, construct, and use it over time. Piaget defines four stages in cognitive development: the sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational stage, each one implies a change to a more complex and abstract form of knowledge. For the ages that the proposal cares about, children are in the preoperational stage. During this period, children use their newfound ability to represent objects in a wide variety of activities using symbols, words and images. This gives students a framework for what they can do, regardless of the language they are learning. Although they have an intuitive solution to the problems, their thinking is limited by rigidity, centralization, and egocentrism.

Furthermore, Piaget (1971) divides this second period of development into two stages: the symbolic function substage and the intuitive thought substage. In the first stage, the child is able to mentally represent an object that is not present. The child begins to portray the world

through paintings and mental images, which reveal the child's thoughts and feelings. Also, there is a dependence on perception in problem-solving. According to Piaget, this stage aids the child's linguistic development. The second stage is marked by greater dependence on intuitive thinking rather than just perception. At this stage, children ask many questions as they try to make sense of the world around them using immature reasoning.

Finally, in relation to other relevant characteristics of the target population for this proposal, Prensky (2001) states that the last generations who grow up with new technology are considered “digital natives”. He states that digital natives think and process the information based on technology that makes them digital users. This generation has an intuitive mastery of informatics, computers, electronic devices and mobile equipment. As described by Cornu (2011) this is the generation of interactivity, community, communication, and collaboration. Therefore, very young learners are digital natives who learn through visuals and graphics and prefer interactive activities.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Teaching English as a foreign language has been a consistent theme in educational institutions since this language is considered as a means to improve one's personal quality of life in a globalized world where learning it opens up more opportunities. According to the EF English Proficiency Index (EPI) study ranking carried out by EF Education First in 2018, Colombia is placed 60th in the low English proficiency category. Because Colombia has a low level of English proficiency, strategies have been developed to try to effectively address this issue. The present policy is known as the National Bilingual Program (Colombia 2004-2019, Ministerio de Educación), and recently renamed Colombia Very Well 2015-2025 (Ministerio de Educación) seeks to set parameters for students to achieve different learning goals at each stage



of their education. Despite the fact that that plan contemplates different educational levels, there is no established method for teaching English in early education, causing difficulties in developing early literacy skills in English, especially in reading comprehension ability as a foreign language (Fandiño, Bermudez, & Lugo, 2013).

According to *Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje* (2016), very young learners must achieve a preparatory pre-A1 based on the Common European Framework. These standards state that students must be able to recognize simple directions and respond non-verbally. Students should be able to express their understanding of English using expressions and associating elements from their context, as well as organize the main events in a short and simple story in a sequential manner. Finally, a young learner should be able to respond to simple questions about personal information. In conclusion, there must be an adaptation and preparation process for listening, speaking and early reading comprehension in English as a foreign language. However, De Mejía (2009) points out that most of the children's exposure to English is limited to one hour each week, which makes difficult for students to develop communication skills like listening, reading, speaking, and writing, which enable them to be active users of the language.

Furthermore, we cannot overlook the fact of low reading levels in the mother tongue (Spanish), which has a direct and dramatic impact on the reading comprehension process in a foreign language, which has been surfacing throughout Latin America and the Caribbean for some time. According to the journal *Semana* (2019), the results of the PISA tests from the year 2018 show a significant decrease in reading comprehension when compared to the results from the year 2015. Some of the reasons for these results, according to De Zubira, are that education is still centered on memory, with an emphasis on grammar and spelling skills, and that it is important to remember that language development cannot be completed in a single class; it must

be a transversal skill. That is, if a problem occurs in the maternal language, it is almost certain to happen in a foreign language, exacerbating the issue.

Equally important is the impact of the pandemic and the dynamics that took on the greater force due to the mediation of the ICTs. Over 40% of the world's population has Internet connectivity, with new users joining every day; 7 out of 10 households in the poorest 20% of the population have a cell phone (Martinez and Porcelli, 2017). Giving children direct access to technology and exposing them to an endless amount of information without any filter or purpose, creating a problem with the appropriate technology use. In this way, it becomes necessary to redirect toward new ways to get educated, qualified, and trained to meet the needs of the 21st century, such as learning the English language through specialized internet pages, tools, and/or different resources.

All in all, Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje suggest to first graders the goal of achieving the preparatory Pre-A1 level standards based on memorization, grammatical rules, and repetition; in that sense, we will be forgetting alternative language learning skills like reading comprehension which incorporates child's processes of creativity, imagination, and curiosity that could benefit them and increase learning opportunities. Similarly, to that, the lack of methodological options for early EFL reading comprehension processes proposed in Colombia Very Well 2015–2025 program gives a chance to build resources with a well-organized pedagogical proposal on how to approach the development of reading comprehension skills that incorporates technology as a complement to the educational processes at school. Thus, this proposal of using picture books as learning tools can be presented as a cross-disciplinary alternative that can enhance class efforts and generate meaningful learning opportunities. Giving

as a result the increase the learner's exposure to the language because they have access to the information through any technological device.

## **Rationale**

Learning English has become a need because of the globalized world and parents have become increasingly concerned about starting their children's learning process at an earlier age. Independently, private and public educational institutions have assumed the challenge of teaching English on their own, based on the belief that the earlier the better. As Espinosa (2010) declared that children should be encouraged to study a foreign language as soon as they have the opportunity because this learning process has academic, cognitive, cultural, economic, linguistic, literacy, and social benefits for them. Furthermore, early development of reading comprehension skills will allow learners to enhance their communication abilities preparing them for lifelong learning. Reading helps learners to acquire new vocabulary, sentence structures, and language patterns, which they can use in their writing and oral communication. Moreover, this skill facilitates the learner's understanding of different cultures and perspectives, which is critical for developing global citizenship and empathy. Students will have the opportunity to use their background knowledge, come up with questions and responses, make inferences, and predictions and interpret texts as part of this project, which will help them to create a deeper awareness of themselves and become more motivated to read.

To tackle the need to develop early reading comprehension skills, the current pedagogical proposal focused on the creation of a picture book digital resource to foster early EFL reading comprehension using interactive reading model in Very young learners. Considering the cognitive development of the child and the complex processes of association when reading, picture books are a tool to generate comprehension, assimilation, and expression of the child's

understanding of their reality. For this study, as first-graders are still learning Spanish literacy skills, the implementation of images in picture books can help children make a logical connection between what they hear and what those concepts mean. Delgado and Chapetón (2015) support the arguments provided here by stating that visual tools help young learners to achieve successful English learning.

In addition to the use of picture books, this proposal will consider the Interactive reading model as a way to involve meaning making use and the prior knowledge they have. The ability to initiate with predictions about the meaning decoding graphic symbols. According to Budiharso (2014) reading comprehension through this model is dependent on both the graphic information and the information in the reader's mind. This proposal aims to build early reading comprehension skills based on pre-reading, while-reading and after-reading activities with the benefits of working with young learners.

Finally, the digital resource will be designed and launched using the platform Genially developed by Juan Rubio, Chema Roldan and Luis Guerra in Spain 2015 created as a web-based tool, available in a free version, that allows users to create interactive and multimedia e-learning materials, fully functional in Android phones, iPhones, and Android/iOS tablets and computers. In this way, this proposal will take advantage of the abilities of the new generation of digital native, such as intuitive mastery in digital devices with a pedagogical instruction needed. As well as the American Academy of Pediatrics (2016) states that some apps that parents find in app stores under the "educational" category have no evidence of efficacy, target only rote academic skills, are not based on established curricula, and have little or no input from developmental specialists or educators.

## **Objectives**

- To design an innovative didactic and pedagogical proposal to enhance early reading comprehension in English learning as a foreign language.
- To create a digital resource through picture books integrating a set of activities in a first approach of very young learners to EFL learning.

## **CHAPTER 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review**

This chapter deals with the state of art as well as the theoretical framework. They will be presented as necessary components to comprehend the nature of this pedagogical proposal designed for very young learners. First, some research studies are presented, followed by a discussion on how those previous studies provide meaningful insights about the main constructs of this proposal. Second, the theoretical constructs that underpin this project, which are Reading comprehension, Interactive reading, Picture books, Storybook reading and ICTs in education will be characterized under the light of theory.

### **State of Art**

In this section, there will be presented previous research done on the topic of reading picture books with early childhood students, with one international study, one national and one local study carried out. Finally, there are four previous studies on the subject of ICT use in EFL settings. one each of the following: a national, international, literary review, and policy statement.

The first significant research project for this pedagogical proposal is titled *Reading stories to EFL children: the strategies for supporting English language acquisition* conducted in China by Zhou (2017). It is a literature-based review that has as its main purpose to explore the impact of reading English storybooks to Chinese children as a method for encouraging English language acquisition as a foreign language, and to provide useful information to parents who are interested in supporting their child's English language development. This study was carried out through the analysis of different investigations published in databases such Academic Search Complete, Education Research Complete, Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), JSTOR, Taylor & Francis Online, and CNKI from 1989 to 2017. The author creates a contrast

between studies carried out in the United States and Canada to understand how reading storybooks help monolingual literacy and how this can be implemented in EFL contexts. And then support her hypothesis with different studies carried out in China. The most important finding is that exposure to English books at home can provide a rich and meaningful context and help Chinese children acquire English interestingly and effectively.

The relevance of this work in the present proposal is that it brings the first approach to the importance of reading in the development of early literacy skills with young learners. Zhou's study employs the same tool that I have as the storybooks and defines a set of concepts around reading and different kinds to approach different literacy levels with children.

Another research related to reading storybooks is the one carried out by Montoya and Castañeda (2016) titled *Storybook Reading as a Strategy to Promote Vocabulary to EFL early Childhood Learners from a State Kindergarten Institution*. The researchers were concerned about the impact of the implementation of storybook reading as an aid for young learners to experience English vocabulary growth through the pictures in storybooks and be able to relate words to sounds and/or things in their immediate reality. So, they decided to conduct a classroom project. The study was carried out with preschool students from 4-5 years old from "Centros de Desarrollo Infantil", also known as CDI located in Pereira, Risaralda.

Storybook reading was one of the constructs of the project; it was conceived as a strategy that fosters language learning and vocabulary acquisition. Some of the important findings are that the pictures help learners to understand the meaning of the main vocabulary of the storybook because illustrations contributed to the relation made by learners between the words with sounds and things of reality. They conclude that the use of storybook reading for learners to acquire English lexicon since the images from the storybooks and learners' involvement in the reading of

the stories assist in this process. In this view, the relevance of this project in relation to the present proposal consists in the use of images and illustrations as means to create meaning from storybooks reading. The difference is that my proposal seeks to go beyond the English lexicon which Montoya & Castañeda's study focused on.

Another study related to reading storybooks relevant to my proposal was conducted in Chia by Barrera (2019) titled *Making connections through realia and storytelling for vocabulary learning with EFL Preschoolers* a research report, at Universidad de la Sabana. The main objective of this study was to increase preschoolers' vocabulary learning to improve their oral communication skills in English as a foreign language through the use of realia and storytelling. This exploratory qualitative study was carried out in a private female school in Bogotá, Colombia with 12 A1 level preschool learners in a private bilingual school. Data were gathered through different instruments such as a pre-and post-test, a focus group, recorded conversations, a teachers' journal, and students' artifacts.

Some important findings are that students were not only able to learn isolated words, but they were also able to construct simple structures when speaking, and they could use them in a context other than the classroom. Despite the fact that the main purpose was to increase vocabulary Barrera's study opens the possibility to explore meaningful associations and complex constructions based on the interconnections enabled by storytelling and realia. This research is relevant to this proposal because it provides an overview of how storytelling and realia allow children to make connections and have meaningful experiences while practicing reading. Furthermore, since the research was conducted at a private bilingual school, it provides an overview and comparison of private and public education, as well as the needs of children at all levels.



The studies mentioned before shared similar goals since they worked with young learners, and they wanted to improve their vocabulary mastery. In order to achieve the goals, they implemented the use of reading picture books at home or at school to facilitate learning. However, the studies only focused on developing vocabulary as the first stage of developing literacy. That is why the present study sought to go beyond the acquisition of vocabulary and seeks to reach a level of literacy that allows the child to create connections between what he reads, hears, and writes as an initial form of reading comprehension.

Several studies demonstrated that reading comprehension is an important skill to develop in EFL setting. Goals can be achieved with the right strategies and approach and technology can have an important role in this process. For instance, some recent studies have demonstrated that incorporating technology into education has advantages. Those studies have been carried out in a variety of contexts and with different kinds of populations, but all addressed the main purpose to integrate technology into the learning process. The first significant study in this field is the article entitled *The Advantages of Mobile Apps for Young Learners in EFL/ESL Classrooms* carried out in English Language Centre, King Faisal University, Al-Hasa, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by Rao (2019). This is an article published in *Research Journal of English (RJOE)* which seeks to discuss the importance of using mobile phones in education, especially in EFL/ESL environment. The author conducts a search for the most popular mobile applications for learning English nowadays, such as The English Club, FluentU, The English Club<sup>TM</sup>, Fun English, Duolingo and others. He concludes by highlighting the importance of their use and making some mobile app-related recommendations for young learners.

Some important findings are related to the benefits of using mobile applications since they play a vital role in motivating and influencing the learners and enhancing their learning

skills. Moreover, they help the learners get information instantly about any concept which is explained by the teachers in the classrooms. Finally, they can practice their language skills at any time and in any location. Another important point is that because mobile devices are useful in assisting students in learning a language in a systematic way, teachers should encourage students to use their phones in the classroom to engage them in the learning process with greater enthusiasm and motivation. It will lead students to become independent learners. This article is relevant for this study since it highlights how the use of mobile applications could enrich the learning process.

The second remarkable study to support this pedagogical proposal in regard to the use of ICTs in education is the article entitled *Concept of Animated Electronic Books in Increasing Young Learners' Literacy Skills in EFL Classroom* by Hans (2018) presents a literature review regarding the theoretical concept of animated e-books in young learners' and how to implement them in increasing young learners' literacy skills in EFL classroom. This is an article published in *Pedagogy: Journal of English Language Teaching* in Indonesia and it was carried out through the analysis of articles and research-based papers that incorporate the main concept. Some findings are related to the existence of a significant link between ICT and EFL education, as well as the importance of incorporating technology into the EFL classroom for young learners, as evidenced by several research studies that demonstrated the importance of incorporating technology to develop young learners' literacy skills. Furthermore, Hans (2018) also emphasizes the absence of ICT facilities in schools as a concern that the governments must solve. Finally, he claims that, while electronic books have some benefits, they are just another learning resource, and that the employment of printed books should not be overlooked. This study is pertinent for

this proposal because it provides a theoretical support for digital picture books and emphasizes the importance of literacy in the young learners, which is one of the goals of this project.

The final significant study is the article entitled *Media and Young Minds* carried out by Hill et al. (2016) who belongs to the Council on Communications and Media. This is a policy statement published in *Pediatrics* from *American Academy of Pediatrics* which the main purpose is to review the existing literature on television, videos, mobile/interactive technology, along with their educational potential. They also highlight areas where pediatricians may provide families with specific guidance on how to manage their young children's media consumption and the necessity of developing healthy activities. The most important conclusion is that pediatricians recognize that technology has become an integral part of daily life and offer recommendations such as identifying apps with appropriate content, and tools for monitoring or limiting child use. They also offered parental advice, such as not using the mobile device to calm the child. This is relevant for this proposal because we must remember that children develop holistically, and the app must take into consideration the expert's pieces of advice.

The studies mentioned before share similar goals since their main purpose was to analyze the impact of introducing digital tools into classroom activities. The first three studies prove that the use of ICT tools improves student learning. The final one is a reminder of important factors to consider when incorporating technology into the learning process

### **Theoretical Framework**

In this section, the three main constructs that support the present pedagogical proposal and provide theoretical foundations such as reading comprehension in EFL, Picture books and ICTs will be defined and characterized.

## ***Reading comprehension***

One of the four abilities required to be an active user of a language is reading. According to Perfetti (1995), as cited in Atehortua (2012), reading is "thinking guided by printing" (p.111). That is, the printed symbols convey meaning. This perspective of reading is closely related to Carrell's (1998) argument that reading was originally just a decoding process. In contrast, reading is more than simply a decoding process and there are authors such as Dechant (1991) who affirms that reading is about meaning and comprehension of meaning. As she explains "comprehension is the goal and purpose of reading, without it, there is no reading" (p.9). Indeed, according to Gamboa (2017), reading involves not only the recognition of printed symbols but also the construction of meaning for the words the writer wishes to convey. The importance of text comprehension in the reading process cannot be overstated. Thus, since meaning is a process that goes beyond decoding, Dechant and Gamboa's view on reading will be essential to this proposal. It is important to highlight that in order to develop reading skills this one should be understood as a more complex ability and it extends beyond decoding symbols, because it is intrinsically related to the construction of meaning, just as the reader's background is inextricably linked to the text.

Furthermore, Norato and Cañón (2008) state that "children learn not only the language as a whole, but also contextualized scenarios that allow them to develop relationships among multiple aspects related to their real-life experiences, previous knowledge, and others" through reading. This aspect is key because children need to be motivated by significant resources that include meaningful components and the prior knowledge, they have in order to construct sophisticated concepts and make learning relevant that can support them throughout the educational path.

According to UNESCO, reading comprehension is one of the sub-skills of the reading process, along with phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and fluency (p.6). As a result, reading comprehension is a process that combines all the sub-skills into one. As Keene et al. (2007) claim that "students need to learn about letters, sounds, and strategies to decode words, but they also need to be taught to understand what they read" (p.22). Keene et al's perspective is adopted in this proposal, with the understanding that reading is a complex process that the reader must go through in order to convey meaning. Hence, if a reader comprehends the main idea of a book's content, he has understood it. That means that "the goal, is to gain an overall understanding of what is described in the text rather than to obtain meaning from isolated words or sentences" (p. 15). Furthermore, according to Vacca (2006), "students learn with text, not necessarily from the text." He describes the moment of text interaction as a "transaction that takes place between the reader and the text, rather than a simple transmission of knowledge from text to reader" (p.193). Moore et al. (2002) also incorporate a third element, the purpose, in addition to the text and the reader. They believe the aim is important to provide a goal for monitoring reading and assisting children in being more attentive to the material. In this way, the reader will play an active role in the understanding process, forming a connection between the text, their knowledge, and the reading process' motivation.

After seeing these multiple reading perspectives, it's time to go deeper into the main models proposed for describing how humans process texts, with a particular focus on the one chosen for this proposal, the interactive reading model. The models are often categorized as Bottom-up, top-down, and interactive models of reading.

## **Interactive Reading Model**

The main models proposed for describing how humans process texts are categorized as Bottom-up, top-down, and interactive models of reading. In light of the fact that the last model, Interactive, is the one that will be used in this proposal. It is necessary to describe the other two models in order to comprehend the interactive reading. Firstly, in bottom-up theories, meaning resides in the text. According to Carrell (1998), this model is essentially a passive process because the reader decodes the writer's intended message by moving from the lowest level, such as letters and words, to the higher levels, such as clauses, sentences, and paragraphs. In top-down model, according to Goodman, readers bring a great deal of information, expectations, assumptions and questions to the text and, if they have a basic understanding of the vocabulary, they will keep on reading as long as the text confirms their expectations (1982). According to the top-down school of reading theory, readers fit the text into prior ideas and then check back when new or unexpected information appears. Considering this, the interactive model proposes that all bottom-up and top-down processes are interconnected. This perspective enriches the point of view of reading as an active reader's process since it must bring their previous knowledge to interact with the text as well as the connection of basic understanding, which takes into account the reader, the text, and the author. That is how it will be interpreted for this project when defining the learning objectives.

In fact, Hedge's (2000) states that "reading can be seen as a kind of dialogue between the reader and the text, or even between the reader and the author" (p. 188). Moreover, according to Hedge (2000), the term interactive refers to the interaction between the different types of knowledge that a reader employs to make meaning of a text. He mentions six different types of knowledge: syntactic knowledge, morphological, general world, sociocultural, topic, and genre

knowledge. Finally, Stanovich (1980) refers to this approach as interactive compensatory. The interactive-compensatory reading model was developed to explain developmental and individual differences in the use of context to facilitate word recognition when reading. That is to say, the interaction model entails two stages for achieving comprehension, which were important considerations when designing activities for first graders through each cycle plan.

### ***Picture Books***

A picture book is a multimodal text (Kress, 2003), which means that it relies on both pictures and words to create meaning, and it is the interdependence of what the pictures show and what the words explain. According to Mourão (2016), picture books with a simple picture-word relationship and illustrations that synchronize with the text provide a secure, supportive learning atmosphere are chosen for ELT contexts. According to Mouro, this type of book is essential in language learning, especially for young children, because it allows them to gain confidence in their learning experience. In addition, there is a type of picture book that goes beyond the conventional thematic language of primary classes and can cover more challenging topics or provide opportunities to approach topics from a different perspective. In this sense, picture books serve as an excuse to introduce young children to the world of adventures and learning. While both types of books will be taken into consideration in order to construct a developmental process in which learners can explore fundamental concepts, the emphasis will be on those that Mouro describes as having more challenging topics because they provide the chance to approach learning from an alternative perspective and represent the opportunity to explore comprehension in more complex levels.

On the other hand, picture books share a connection with story reading, so we'll explore this relationship to maximize the value of picture books.

## **Story Book Reading**

Teale (199) states that reading storybooks is important for children's literacy development because it teaches them what books are for, what language to expect in them, and what books are for entertainment and learning. Sulzby & Barnhart (1992) states that there is an emergent reading when children start “reading” meaning having contact in the early ages. The authors state that children naturally begin to read storybooks in their homes. Children's emerging reading habits are usually formed through favorite books or repetitive reading activities, and teachers need to read regularly as well. Given that, reading picture books will be portrayed as a chance to introduce students to stories in which they can learn and unconsciously have the first contact with language structures. According to the authors, this process has been started from an early age at home. Making use of those first skills obtained the challenge will be to consider them to improve them in this proposal, which would allow pupils to explore signs and components of stories they can interpret at an early age.

The usage of storybook reading in an EFL classroom, according to Porras (2010), created a good learning environment and provided meaningful and comprehensible input. The language learning mechanism is activated by stories, and children can easily infer language elements from the information provided by stories. According to the author, storybook reading can help students improve their ability to understand spoken language and engage in critical thinking. This follows the same premise as Guillen and Hall (2003), who suggest that children learn best when immersed in authentic, meaningful experiences. The aforementioned points of view outline a strategy for how storybook reading can allow students to interact meaningfully and authentically with English as a second language during the design of this project. Finally, it will be seen as an opportunity to create a scenario from which they can benefit.



## *ICTs in education*

Technology has a strong presence in our culture; citizens now live in a technology-mediated society, which is important to identify and characterize since this one will be used to design an application on this proposal. According to Khan et al. (2015), information communication technology (ICT) refers to technologies that provide access to information through communication (p.85). They also stated that ICT is an umbrella term that encompasses any communication device, including radio, television, cell phones, computer and network hardware, satellite systems and so on as well as the various services and appliances associated with them, such as videoconferencing and distance learning. Furthermore, as Prensky (2001) points out, new generations are associated with the term "digital natives," or those who grew up with technology and required the speed and multimodality of new technologies. According to the author, children require contact with technology, and if they are taught using a passive methodology, they may get disconnected and demotivated. This is often viewed as a drawback, but this project benefits from what the author said because learning opportunities will be facilitated possible through the use of technology by developing an application that can engage and respond to students needs of today's culture.

The use of ICTs in education is a broad widely debated topic. One of the benefits, according to Khan et al. (2015), is that technology can empower teachers and students, transforming the teaching and learning process from a highly teacher-dominated to a student-centered one, resulting in improved learning outcomes. This is essential because the application that will be built through this innovative project seeks to encourage students' active participation. On the other hand, ICTs are the current educational innovation, according to Gomez and Marcedo (2010), because they allow teachers and students to make major changes in their

regular classroom activities and learning processes. According to the authors, ICTs can also increase collaborative learning since the tools they give facilitate group work, social behavior development, and idea exchange. Finally, as stated in conclusions by (Hamón & Portela, 2017) and (Cruz & López, 2021), the use of ICT in education has the potential to boost students' motivation and enthusiasm in learning different topics.

Hence, the use of technology has created opportunities for different, effective, and innovative teaching and learning approaches, such as blended learning.

### **Blended Learning**

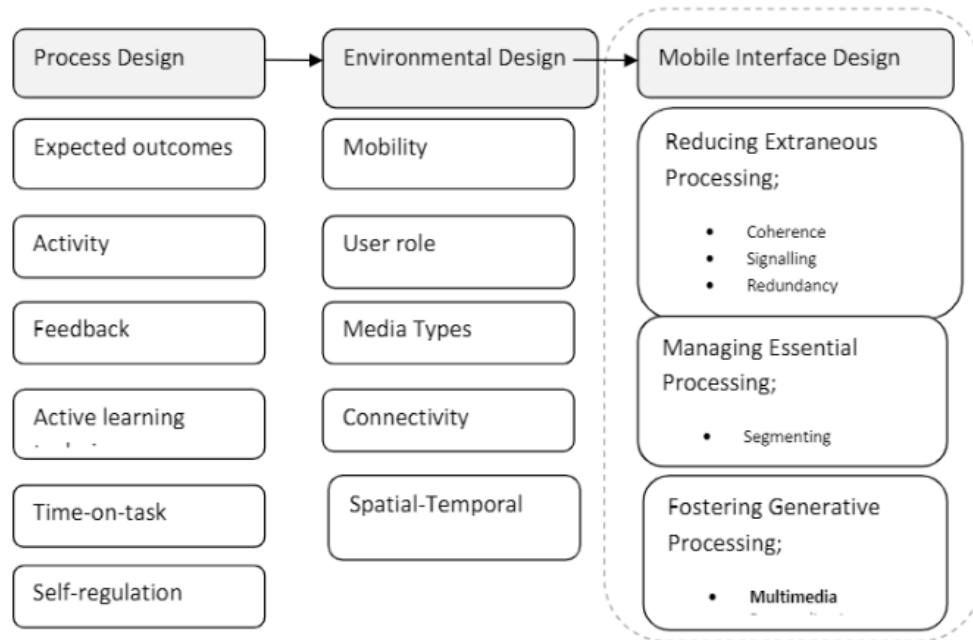
Perdede (2012) defines blended learning as a method of combining traditional face-to-face instruction with online digital media such as eLearning. Additionally, blended learning makes use of connectivism, behaviorism, and constructivism as theories of learning. The constructivist theory holds that through exploration and interaction with their environment, students actively build their own knowledge (Jonassen, 1992), giving them the chance to integrate their prior knowledge into the design of the pre-reading tasks. Behaviorism places a strong emphasis on the influence of external stimuli on behavior and focuses on the use of rewards and penalties to promote learning (Skinner, 1953). The app will give users instant feedback so they can evaluate it and develop their own learning strategies. According to the connectivism theory, education is a process of connecting information nodes and building networks that support learning (Siemens, 2005). These theories serve as the foundation for blended learning by highlighting the significance of active participation, environmental stimuli, and social connections. This argument is crucial to this proposal because reading comprehension shares network-like characteristics with it, where students can connect different processes to

make meaning. Because of this, blended learning represents a distinct approach to successfully integrating technology in the classroom.

Along with this, blended learning offers several benefits, according to Garrison and Knuka (2004), it increases student engagement, flexibility, and accessibility. Blended learning allows for the accommodation of multiple learning styles and preferences by combining different methods of teaching. However, it also presents some challenges, such as the requirement for teacher training, technical assistance, and effective course design (Bonk & Graham, 2006). These difficulties must be handled to ensure that blended learning initiatives are successful and sustainable, and they have been considered to this proposal in order to lower the impact.

On the other hand, when it comes to the usage of mobile applications for learning purposes, Kukulska-Hulme et al (2011) refer to it as m-learning or mobile learning. These technologies, according to the authors, have the potential to enable spontaneous, informal, contextual, portable, ubiquitous, pervasive, and personal learning opportunities. It refers to the use of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets in education. Some of the features of m-learning have been described by Traxler (2009), cited by Çakmak (2019), describes some of the characteristics of m-learning as personalized, situated, and authentic. He explains that personalized learning acknowledges that learning is personal and adapts to each individual's requirements or preference. Situated learning occurs when learning takes place in a relevant setting and thus supports context-specific learning. And authentic learning involves exploration and inquiry, as well as real-life hands-on experiences. Çakmak (2019) brings an overview of some critical factors and principles to be considered when designing mobile learning resources, as were proposed by Killilea (2012), Levert (2006), Mayer (2001), Naismith and Corlett (2006),

and Parsons et al. (2007), as cited in its document (p. 34). Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework.

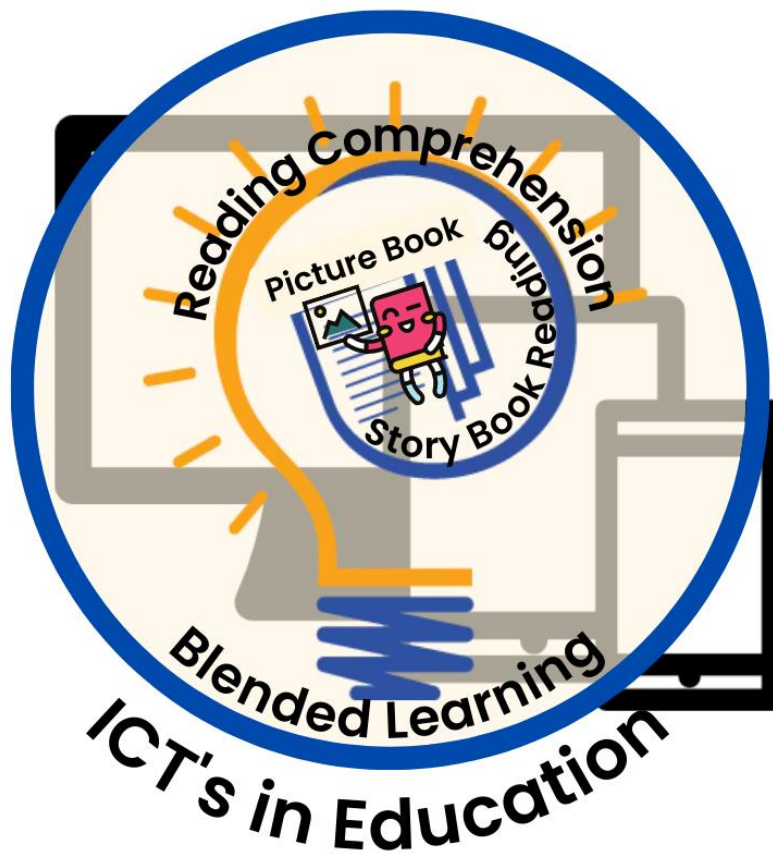


**Figure 1.** Design principles in mobile learning presented by Çakmak (2019).

As presented in Figure 1, Çakmak (2019) defines design dimensions as follows: process design, environmental design, and mobile interface design. According to the author, the first dimension, process design, defines the process by which a learner is recruited and participates in the course of mobile learning. It considers fundamental elements such as expected outcomes, activity, feedback, active learning techniques, time on task, and self-regulation.

Figure 2 is a visual representation of how the theoretical concepts fit together and how they can be used to enhance one another in this pedagogical proposal. The black circle touches the background image of technological devices including a computer, a tablet, and a mobile

phone showing how ICTs can relate to all elements included in it and among them. Having said this, into the circle there is a light bulb figure that symbolized the reading comprehension process as the result of integrating the interactive reading model through the storybook reading supported from the center of the spiral which is the picture book which is the starting point of the spiral. A representation of how everything is articulated to support the relationship between each construct is shown by the connection between the circle, the backdrop image of the technical equipment, and the light bulb.



**Figure 2.** Adaptation of technological and reading comprehension process. Own resource

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN**

This chapter presents two important aspects of this proposal: the definition of a pedagogical and didactic innovation proposal in light of theory and the description of key visions that underpin the proposal and facilitate its comprehension. First, there is the vision of curriculum; second, there is the vision of language; third, there is the vision of learning; fourth, there is the vision of classroom; the role of the teacher and finally, some ethical considerations.

### **Pedagogical and Didactic Innovation Proposal**

Both pedagogy and didactics are important aspects of the learning process, and they work together to give educational solutions. Pedagogy is the scientific and methodological orientation of educational practice, according to Lucio (1989), whereas didactic is what is taught. These processes have emerged to address different learning needs over time, but the impact of technology on teaching and learning demands a change in educational practices. According to Macanch et al. (2020), educational practices should prioritize the establishment of a culture of educational, pedagogical, and didactic innovation, because it is only via these that educational excellence can be achieved and maintained.

According to UNESCO (2016), educational innovation is a planned act of problem-solving aimed at improving the quality of student learning beyond the traditional paradigm. It requires going beyond academic knowledge and moving away from students' passive learning toward an idea of participatory learning that is built in everyone. This definition is useful because it encompasses several key features of educational innovation, including change, problem solving, active student participation, and the importance of social relationships in teaching and learning that is going to be integrated in this proposal moving from a student's passive learning to an active role. Additionally, emerging didactic innovations, according to Libedinsky (2016),

are teacher-generated approaches that are defined by challenging and breaking apart from existing consolidated practices that are put together with curricular content. These are executed in a certain context and period, resurrecting traditions and backgrounds while also responding to the cultural interests of teachers and pupils. In light of this, the current proposal can be seen as innovative because it considers the challenges that educators and students have when effectively integrating technology into the classroom. In this regard, the use of an application that takes into account conventional picture books and potentially enhances and adapts them to the cultural and technological context can be seen as innovative.

According to Vasquez-Cano et al. (2019) define that the innovation takes place in processes that are well-designed, well-ordered, well-sequenced, verifiable, and evaluable, allowing the results to be known in a short time. As a result, the plan, as well as its execution, evaluation, critique, and improvement of new innovating technologies, must be the foundation of innovation. Furthermore, technology has an important role as part of the innovation as Garcia et al. (2018) states, ICTs can be used to improve the quality of teaching-learning processes both within and outside the classroom by incorporating new didactic strategies that arouse students' interest and motivation. It's essential to note that the main objective of this pedagogical plan is to create a new method of approaching the reading process through the use of an application that will be developed to the needs of today's students in terms of technology, fulfilling the characteristics of innovation in that way.

### ***Vision of Curriculum***

Due to the need created as a result of the Covid-19 contingency situation. There is a notion that new educational approaches must be developed in order to satisfy the actual demands of students. In this regard, technology can be considered an opportunity to provide an alternative

that supports and enhances the learning processes of the students. Because this proposal aims to improve learners' early reading comprehension by utilizing picture books through a digital resource, the curriculum for this project is based on the concept of blended learning. B-learning is a mixed-mode of learning that combines in-person instruction with online academic pursuits, or else stated another way, this instructional strategy "integrates in-person instruction-learning experiences between the instructor and student with those that are delivered online and require the use of information and communication technologies" (Richey, 2013, p. 46). In other words, virtual resources are used to support the educational needs that are presented in the classroom.

According to Amaka and Goeman (2017), they state that when creating an online curriculum, some factors to take into account are interactive activities, the curriculum's navigability, the relevance of the content, flexibility of access, the richness of the media, the platform's usability, individualization, the mobility and proximity of the curriculum, and the responsiveness of instructors and peers. This will be able to create activities that encourage active engagement and foster communication, teamwork, and critical thinking as was stated by (Hettler, 2015). To succeed in creating a curriculum that integrates face-to-face teaching and non-face-to-face, technology will be necessary to consider not only the type of activities but also individualities and reading interest from the learners.

Last but not least, Cheng and Chau (2016), cited in Burnham (2021), assert that it is essential to let students use a variety of multimedia tools to construct meaning from the content and that activities should encourage individual constructivism and social engagement in order to improve student learning. Although not all online tools are equally successful in encouraging participation and meaningful learning, having a choice of activities and ways for students to access the curriculum is crucial to increasing active learning (Tsankov & Damyanov, 2017 in



Burnham (2021)). A strong online curriculum fulfills the needs of 21st-century learners and offers a choice of interactive and engaging activities.

### *Vision of Language*

This project views language as a social practice. This understanding of language includes social practices for meaning construction and interpretation that are directly connected to how people interact with language. Language is a way of seeing, comprehending, and communicating that is dependent on relationships with the outside world, claim Scarino et al. (2009). To build and maintain interpersonal and social relationships in many circumstances, language is thus understood in accordance with this vision rather than as a code to be learned. Because it allows for the sharing of a variety of learning experiences with a sense of social interaction and production, the idea of language as a social practice is pertinent for the purpose of the interaction with a digital resource such an application that requires a collaborative learning from the students considering their social abilities at the first ages.

In addition, according to Scarino et al. (2009), a professional perspective that perceives language as a social practice requires that students participate in activities that allow them to create and interpret meaning, communicate their own personal meanings, and make connection with the new language. In light of the aforementioned, students are better able to comprehend the relationships between languages when language pedagogies place an emphasis on the interpretation and meaning creation. This is because they will have the opportunity to interact with the language directly, which will aid in their understanding of the relationships between languages.

### ***Vision of Learning***

The learning process that promotes the use of language as a medium of communication, according to Tudor (2001), is the one that is conceptualized in this proposal as experiential learning. This means that under this approach, language is taught by giving students the chance to interact with a real situation, resources, settings, and contexts in order to create meaningful experiences. This vision is therefore founded on four guiding principles: (1) a focus on communication rather than language acquisition; (2) a holistic approach that reflects communicative competencies; (3) the use of authentic material; and (4) the use of multimodal texts with cultural content that allow the language to act as a tool for cultural learning. In this sense, learning will be seen as the process in which the learner has an active role taking advantage of the situation and resources provided to that purpose.

According to Kolb and Kolb (2009), learning involves a person's feelings, perceptions, thoughts, opinions, and conduct in addition to cognition. As a result, learning is a holistic process with a multidimensional nature of communication, supporting a multimodal approach that places a strong focus on doing and the use of real resources, as stated by Tudor (2001). This perspective, which is an essential part of the reading comprehension process, improves the learning outcomes expected from this proposal. In order to foster meaningful communication opportunities and holistic growth of skills, this innovative didactic project will present real-world context, resources, settings, and opportunities to explore emotions, perceptions, and opinions.

### ***Vision of Classroom***

According to this pedagogical concept and Tudor (2001), the classroom vision includes communication and socializing because these activities value a student's participation in their

social reality. According to the author, language and social interaction should be used as learning tools in the classroom. The communication that results from classroom interaction also forms a connection with communicative language in other contexts. In other words, this idea of a classroom ensures that students will have opportunities for social and educational communication that will transform them into active subjects.

Additionally, the classroom is essential to the learning process, according to Garcia-Bulle (2018). It provides the components required to create the ideal learning environment since a warm climate encourages students to help others, feel more a part of something, and be challenged, take risks, and ask questions. establishing the foundation for the development of learning processes that will be transversally enhanced at another location through digital connectivity. This vision of the classroom will give light to this proposal since reading activities must be started in the classroom as a way to create a safe environment in which students can explore resources, knowledge, language, and experiences. Although, it is crucial to consider that the classroom can have an extension of it outside by working with children in the home environment as a complement.

### ***Role of the Teacher***

According to Kalantzis and Copes (2016), the teacher is a professional who makes informed strategic decisions based on the needs of the learner. Teachers must be able to establish a connection between children's knowledge, abilities, and sensibility with their own teacher's skills to provide a meaningful learning experience and use a material that enhances children's learning. Because the literacy process is unique to each kid, and as Sulzby and Barnhart (1992) point out, each child has different stages of developing literacy skills a teacher must be an observer to allow learners to take an active role in their own learning. This viewpoint will switch

from being teacher-centered to being student-centered, and the teacher's main duty will be to observe, determine the optimal ways to address learning, and foster an environment of collaboration with their learners.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

When selecting picture books for this project, various ethical considerations were taken into account, such as author copyright, age-appropriateness, and examination of the selected theme while respecting the integrity of the original text. For this proposal, there were taken as inspiration the picture books "Elmer" written and illustrated by David McKee, which are a part of the author's collection suitable for young learners. To ensure that the work is utilized in an ethically and legally responsible manner all references have been included. Consequently, the adaptations were made considering the target age group's comprehension level while still respecting the author's and the copyright holder's creations. Whenever modifications were made, the original material's author was given credit.

Additionally, despite the fact that "Elmer" is a popular children's book, it was crucial to assess where the themes and content were suitable for the target audience, especially given that these books explore themes of diversity, identity, and acceptance. The educator's role is to approach these topics with sensitivity so as not to offend or harm children who may come from diverse backgrounds. The books are also used in a way that do not support stereotypes or promote negative behavior toward those who have different backgrounds or physical attributes. Therefore, educators must also make sure that the book is used in a genuine effort to foster understanding, empathy, and acceptance of diversity rather than merely as a checkbox exercise.

## CHAPTER 4: PEDAGOGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

This chapter describes the pedagogical and instructional design proposed to provide an alternative option to promote early EFL reading comprehension considering the interactive model using an application that employs digital picture books. Thus, it incorporates a set of virtually designed activities using the application “Genially”, developing a resource to complement in-class instruction to help students approach the early reading stages through three cycles that contain a variety of materials. The picture books are the main tool in this process in consequence the stories chosen come from a collection of picture books by the author David McKee and they are “Elmer the patchwork elephant”, “Elmer’s parade” and “Elmer and Wilbur”. These stories were adapted to the digital format utilizing the respective official website and associated YouTube channels. The didactic and pedagogical project is divided into 3 cycles of 3 lessons to be developed during 9 classes including a section on home activities using a different story per cycle. The intervention will be carried out in a series of sessions, each averaging 45 minutes and scheduled every week for two months and a half. Furthermore, this idea emphasizes the importance of implementing these educational interventions in three distinct and well-organized cycles.

Each cycle consists of three lesson plans that incorporate before, during, and after reading activities. The plan would take into account instructor intervention in face-to-face classes and giving students some time to interact with the digital resource in light of how crucial it is to teach students how to use and make meaningful the usage of the application. According to Kalantzis et al. (2016), students play a learner-centered role in authentic teaching that attempts to give students a platform for self-expression. For example, these authors state that when students engage with the curriculum and co-design their own learning, they succeed. Since students are

seen as the primary participants in the learning process, it is crucial to consider their prior knowledge and the method by which they create their knowledge since doing so enables them to participate in the learning process.

The application designed is named “PicBook App” it integrates what was previously stated considering the active learner’s role as the most important one using authentic teaching materials that allow them to build a connection between the previous and new knowledge. The app has three profiles, one for students, parents, and teachers. Student’s profile immediately directs them to the activities called missions that integrate levels, for their part, parent and teacher’s profile include a brief description of how to use the resource and how they can support the learner’s experience. The tool was designed with three missions that correspond to each cycle, and every three levels that are each lesson plan. Learners should complete each level to move on to the next mission. Students receive feedback on each activity to make sure they can monitor their own progress and interaction with the resource. There are both textual and visual prompts available.

The next table (Table 1) presents a description of the pedagogical proposal based on the cycles designed for the project. Each cycle entitles its name and the lesson plan that compound it. The material that corresponds to each lesson and objectives are also presented, as well as the useful language that will be addressed. Subsequently, the lesson plans of cycles one, two and three will be described briefly.

For access to the PicBook App that integrates the three cycles, lesson plan and materials, go this link:

<https://view.genial.ly/63ee6cd73a1a3a00112b6fcb/interactive-content-pict-book-app>

CYCLE	LESSON PLAN	OBJECTIVE	MATERIAL	USEFUL LANGUAGE
<p>1.</p> <p><b>Let's start our adventure</b></p> <p>Awareness and exploration</p> <p>(Duration: 3 lessons with a 45-minute class per lesson)</p> <p>Picture book: Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant by David McKee</p>	<p>1.</p> <p>Meeting a new friend</p>	<p><b>GENERAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitize students and let them get used to reading creating awareness and encourage exploration.</li> </ul> <p><b>SPECIFIC</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Genially resource Application</li> <li>Elephant images</li> <li>Factual information about the author.</li> <li>Digital Picture Book: Elmer by David McKee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-introduction</li> <li>Adjectives</li> <li>Color</li> </ul>
	<p>2.</p> <p>What does Elmer look like?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify and discover the message of the story</li> <li>To describe the main character of the story.</li> <li>To interact with the main character of the story.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Genially resource Application</li> <li>Factual information video about Elephants  Animals for Kids   All Things Animal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greetings.</li> <li>Colors</li> <li>Adjectives</li> <li>Grammar: He can..., He has..., He is...</li> </ul>
	<p>3.</p> <p>Play and celebrate with us.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Factual information about Parade of the Painted Elephants</li> <li>Elmer The Patchwork Elephant - 'Be A Rainbow' Music Video</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greetings</li> <li>Party vocabulary</li> <li>Adjectives</li> <li>Color</li> <li>My favorite...</li> <li>Grammar: I can..., I have..., I am</li> </ul>

**Table 1** Instructional design

CYCLE	LESSON PLAN	OBJECTIVE	MATERIAL	USEFUL LANGUAGE
<p>2.</p> <p><b>Let's feel the story</b></p> <p><b>Experimental Reading</b></p> <p>(Duration: 3 lessons with a 45-minute class per lesson)</p> <p><b>Picture book: Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee</b></p>	<p>1.</p> <p>Elmer's cousin</p>	<p><b>GENERAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide opportunities to experiment with reading and start writing.</li> </ul> <p><b>SPECIFIC</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Picture Book Application through genially</li> <li>Elephant song</li> <li>Video Reading aloud Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greetings</li> <li>Family members</li> <li>Elephant characteristics</li> <li>Actions:</li> </ul>
	<p>2.</p> <p>How different we are!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To start reading by themselves the story and provide meaning to it.</li> <li>To identify the differences between the characters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Picture Book Application through genially</li> <li>Video Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greetings</li> <li>Colors</li> <li>Shapes</li> <li>Opposites</li> </ul>
	<p>3.</p> <p>The story</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To create timelines and interact with the settings, problem, characters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Picture Book Application through genially</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greetings</li> <li>Animals: elephant, tiger, rabbits, birds.</li> <li>Settings: tree, lake, rabbit hole.</li> </ul>



CYCLE	LESSON PLAN	OBJECTIVE	MATERIAL	USEFUL LANGUAGE
<p>3. Let's do it by yourself</p> <p>Early reading and writing</p> <p>(Duration: 3 lessons with a 45-minute class per lesson)</p> <p>Picture books:</p> <p>1. Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee</p> <p>2. Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant by David McKee</p>	1. Favorite characters	<p><b>GENERAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the opportunity to create new stories based on the stories read.</li> </ul> <p><b>SPECIFIC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To determine the main character of their story.</li> <li>To describe the setting and different places of the story</li> <li>To summarize and retell the new story created by the students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Picture Book</li> <li>Application through genially</li> <li>Elmer's stories video and story book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greetings</li> <li>Family members</li> <li>Animals</li> <li>Adjectives</li> </ul>
	2. Favorite Setting		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Picture Book</li> <li>Application through genially</li> <li>Elmer's stories video and story book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greetings</li> <li>Places to live: forest, lake, trees.</li> </ul>
	3. My new version of Elmer		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Picture Book</li> <li>Application through genially</li> <li>Elmer's stories video and story book</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greetings</li> <li>Places to live</li> <li>Animals</li> <li>Adjectives</li> </ul>

## **Cycle 1: Let's start our adventure**

The first cycle of this proposal is titled "Let's start our adventure". It consists of a series of activities that will allow students to get used to the technological application "PicBook App" while demonstrating their comprehension level. The objective of this cycle is to sensitize students to the reading experience, starting with the reading aloud technique, so they can develop an awareness of the reading comprehension process and foster their exploration skills. This is a three-lesson plan that uses the picture book "Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant" by David McKee while integrating in-class and at-home practice.

The first lesson plan *Meeting a new friend* attempts to help students recognize and understand the message of the story. Starting with the presentation of the author and some important information. During the reading-aloud activity, learners would make predictions about the story and learn about the key components of the story, organizing the sequence and defining the elements like the main character, story setting, problem, and solution. In addition, they would reinforce concepts like colors, body parts, adjectives, and personal information. They would also integrate their previous knowledge with the new factual information about elephants.

The second class *What does Elmer look like?* points at developing the student's ability to describe and distinguish certain characteristics of the main character of the story. Firstly, learners will use their previous reading experience to identify the main characteristic of the story's character and previous knowledge about animal sounds. They would also integrate the concepts of similar and different. They will review implicitly adjectives and "I can, I have and I am" structures. Afterward, they will pay attention to the different Elmer's emotions that he experiences in the story and determine what makes Elmer unique. Finally, students will become aware of how they feel about being different.

The final class of this cycle *Play and celebrate with us* aims at virtually interacting with the characters of the story through a parade that symbolizes the solution of the story. Students will learn that the others are crucial for celebrations by listening to David McKee's "Elmer and the Parade," a tale about his parade's planning, and recognizing Elmer's friends. They will go deeply into the belief that everyone is unique and has different abilities. They will finish by decorating the parade and singing a song together that will inspire them to celebrate and share their differences with others.

### **Cycle 2: Let's feel the story.**

The second cycle of this pedagogical proposal deals with reading opportunities for experimentation. Students will be able to learn how to use their own reading strategies to make predictions and look into the plot timeline using the picture book "Elmer and Wilbur" by David McKee. They will also review the vocabulary of greetings, family members, adjectives, places, and animals. The three-lesson plans are designed to help learners in improving their reading comprehension skills through different interactive activities in the PicBook App.

The first lesson plan *Elmer's cousin* gathers information on how learners can engage in a predictable activity to identify the new character of the story and make connections between the old and new stories collecting information about the family members that Elmer has. Through activities like character descriptions, matching, and questions, they will retell the tale. They will finally integrate the knowledge acquired during the lesson with their immediate context by looking up the location of zoos and the animals that reside there.

The second lesson plan *How different we are!* consist of differentiating the characters of the story from one another by pointing out the features that set them apart. Students will have a

reading-aloud exercise and questions will be asked to measure their understanding. They are expected to demonstrate their comprehension through an activity that takes the story's components into account. In the end, learners will receive some clues to help them create their own story setting and attempt to go deeper into the meaning of phrases like “playing tricks on others isn't very nice”.

The third lesson plan *The story* centers on allowing students to create a timeline considering the setting, problem, and characters. They are expected to use places and names of animal's vocabulary, as well as questions and other tools for story organization, to describe the tale's problem. They will have a guided writing exercise to explain how the problem occurred as an opportunity to use their own words, expressions, and ideas that they have been developing throughout the cycle. Finally, they will have a recorded speaking activity to understand more complex ideas like being a ventriloquist. To create timelines and interact with the settings, problem, characters.

### **Cycle 3: Let's do it by yourself**

The third cycle is named “Let's do it by yourself”. The main purpose of this cycle is to provide the opportunity to interact with the application on their own based on the story proposed that has been read previously. This will be considered in the reading and writing stages. This stage is a three-lesson plan in which children will be encouraged to create their own version of the story through drawings and narratives based on reading-aloud activities, narrative and creative strategies interacting with the application.

The first lesson plan *Favorite character* focuses on how they can determine their favorite character as well as those features and qualities that make them unique. Learners will be able to

choose their favorite story and read it independently using questions that dive into why it is their favorite story and those details that caught their attention. The next step is for students to talk about the character's inner qualities, such as feelings and reactions, to help them experience a connection to them.

The second lesson plan *Favorite Setting* draws attention to techniques that help learners describe a setting and pinpoint their various locations within them. They will be able to choose and compare from a variety of settings that are presented in the stories addressed “Elmer and Wilbur” and “Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant” by David McKee. They will determine how the problem and the solution were affected by the environment and they will research the location to take into account its real-life characteristics.

The last lesson *My new version of Elmer* consists of allowing students to summarize and retell the new version of the story they have created while incorporating previously defined elements. Students will consider their favorite story to create an additional section of the story. They will draw and retell the section they would like to change, adding the character and the setting to make Elmer’s story even better. They are expected to put into practice all of the useful language related to animals, places, adjectives, family members, colors, and emotions that were covered through the cycles.

### **Instructional Design**

This section will present the lesson plans for the three cycles with a total of nine lesson plans. Each lesson plan seeks to provide guidance and resources for teaching EFL reading comprehension classes to young students in public institutions in Colombia while taking blended learning into consideration. They include instructions on how to develop each session as well as

the URLs that will be used. Moreover, each lesson plan has an outline that shows how the activities will look in the "PicBook App" application.



**Figure 3.** Logo “Picbook App”. Own resource

**CYCLE 1:** Let’s start our adventure - Awareness and exploration

**LESSON PLAN 1:** Meeting a new friend

<b>CYCLE 1:</b> Let’s start our adventure	<b>LESSON PLAN 1:</b> Meeting a new friend	<b>Time: 45 minutes</b>
<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To sensitize students towards reading aloud activity</li> <li>• To identify the character of the story “Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant by David McKee”</li> <li>• To interact with the digital application to learn.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Language Contents:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction yourself.</li> <li>• My name is... What is your name?</li> <li>• Adjectives: young, old, tall, fat, thin,</li> <li>• Color: yellow, orange, red, purple, green, black, white</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elephant image</li> <li>• Picture Book: Elmer by David McKee – PDF</li> <li>• Genially resource Application</li> <li>• Read Aloud: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUepS9yGANQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUepS9yGANQ</a></li> </ul>		

## PROCEDURE

TIME  
15  
minutes

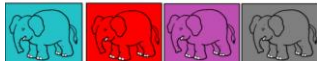
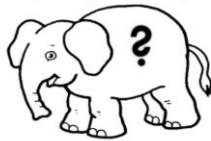
- Greetings and welcome to the class with class Elephant puppet. Introducing himself.

### Pre-reading: Observation, recognition and spelling of your name.

The teacher will present the picture book application with the first part to introduce yourself. Elmer will ask “what’s your name?” Students will type their own names and will meet Elmer.

- What color is an elephant?

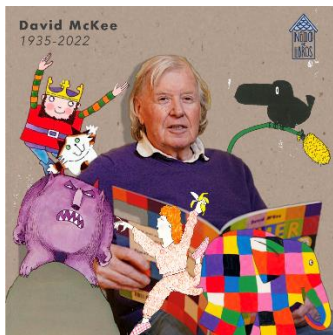
What color is an elephant?



Resource adapted from: [https://www.scotlandme.com/uploads/1/4/6/0/14603394/elmer-story\\_ppt\\_1.pdf](https://www.scotlandme.com/uploads/1/4/6/0/14603394/elmer-story_ppt_1.pdf)

- What do you think is the story about? *Elephants*
- Talk about the title and author:  
What is the name of the author?  
Who is David Elmer?

Teacher will bring interesting information by clicking on the eye to learn about David McKee



Resource taken from: <https://nidodelibros.com/adios-mr-mckee/>

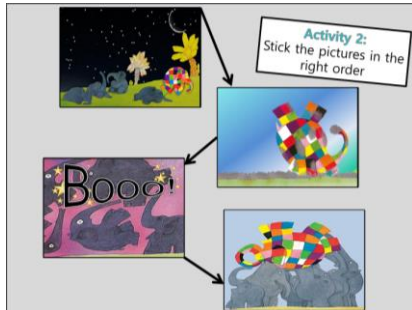
David McKee was a British writer of children’s picture books. Some of the famous characters he created are: Elmer the patchwork elephants, King Rolo and Mr. Benn.

15 minutes	<p><b>While-reading: Reading Aloud</b></p> <p>Students will listen to the story “Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant by David McKee”          ISL Own material: <a href="https://en.islcollective.com/english-esl-video-lessons/visual-comprehension/general-visual-comprehension-practice/emotions/elmer-the-patchwork-elephant/793747">https://en.islcollective.com/english-esl-video-lessons/visual-comprehension/general-visual-comprehension-practice/emotions/elmer-the-patchwork-elephant/793747</a>          Original video link- YouTube: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUepS9yGANQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUepS9yGANQ</a></p> <p>While reading ask questions to students before the story says about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What color are the elephants?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ They’re green,</li> <li>✓ They’re red</li> <li>✓ They’re gray – Correct Answer</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Is Elmer different? <i>True or false.</i></li> <li>• Look at Elmer’s expression. How is he feeling about being different?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Happy</li> <li>✓ Sad – Correct Answer</li> <li>✓ Scared</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What color is Elmer now?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ He’s pink</li> <li>✓ He’s green</li> <li>✓ He’s yellow</li> <li>✓ He’s gray – Correct answer</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What happened when Elmer shouted "Boo!"?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ They discovered Elmer – Correct answer</li> <li>✓ The elephants were angry</li> <li>✓ They run away</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Own resource created on the platform: Islcollective:  <a href="https://en.islcollective.com/english-esl-video-lessons">https://en.islcollective.com/english-esl-video-lessons</a></p>
15 minutes	<p><b>Post-reading:</b></p> <p>Students will have to answer 3 questions through the application. Each one will have feedback</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Find Elmer in the image by clicking. Where is Elmer?              Play, find and circle Elmer.</li> </ol>



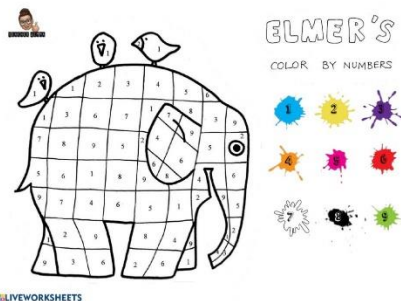
<https://www.tinytap.com/activities/g334/play/where-is-elmer>

2. Read and match.
  - ✓ Main character - *Elmer*
  - ✓ Story set - *Forest*
  - ✓ Problem of the story – *Elmer felt bad about being different*
  - ✓ Solution – *Elmer and his friends made a parade*
3. Drag the pictures in the right order according to the story.



Resource adapted from [https://www.scotland.com/uploads/1/4/6/0/14603394/elmer-story\\_ppt\\_1.pdf](https://www.scotland.com/uploads/1/4/6/0/14603394/elmer-story_ppt_1.pdf)

4. Color in Elmer with the pattern by numbers.



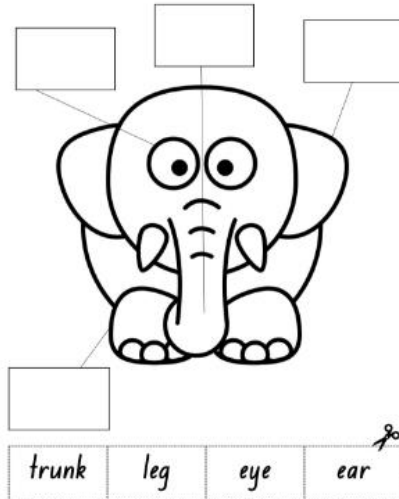
Resource adapted from:

[https://www.liveworksheets.com/worksheets/en/English\\_as\\_a\\_Second\\_Language\\_%28ESL%29/Colours/Elmer-colours\\_hr154471ho](https://www.liveworksheets.com/worksheets/en/English_as_a_Second_Language_%28ESL%29/Colours/Elmer-colours_hr154471ho)

Once they have finished, they will have a key password to continue they got during the class number: “15” to access at home to the activity.

At home; they should use the app and practice using the app on their own and do reading aloud activity and repeat the activity done in class and complete “at-home activity”

1. Drag the labels to elephant's body parts

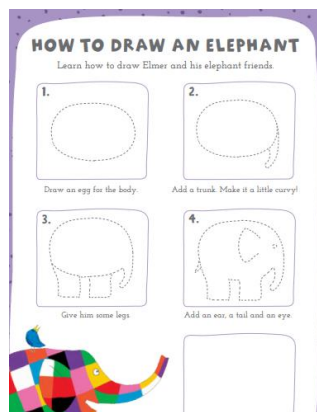


Resource adapted from: <https://casualcase.com.au/download/elmer/>

2. How to draw and elephant step by step.

Follow the guideline Instructions:

- ✓ Draw an egg for the body
- ✓ Add a trunk. Make it a little curvy!
- ✓ Give him some legs.
- ✓ Add and ear, a tail and an eye.



Resource adapted from: <https://www.elmer.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Elmer-Day-Activity-Pack-1.pdf>

3. What does Elmer look like? Is he different?

Students will get a password code to continue to the next level. Code: 152

**CYCLE 1:** Let's start our adventure - Awareness and exploration

## LESSON PLAN 2: What does Elmer look like?

<b>CYCLE 1:</b> Let's start our adventure	<b>LESSON PLAN 2:</b> What does Elmer look like?	<b>Time: 45 minutes</b>
<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To practice with students reading aloud activity</li><li>• To describe the main character of the story "Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant by David McKee"</li><li>• To interact with the digital application to learn.</li></ul>		
<b>Language Contents:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greetings.</li><li>• Colors: Elmer is yellow, orange, red, purple, green, black, white.</li><li>• Adjectives: Trunk, long nose, big, tall.</li><li>• Grammar: He can..., He has..., He is...</li></ul>		
<b>Materials:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Picture Book: Elmer by David McKee – PDF</li><li>• Genially resource Application</li><li>• Read Aloud: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUepS9yGANQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUepS9yGANQ</a></li><li>• Factual facts about elephants: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CP5uJVpHrVw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CP5uJVpHrVw</a></li></ul>		

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	
TIME 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greetings and welcome to the class. Greeting as Elmer does it in the story</li></ul> <p><b>Pre-reading: Observation and recognition.</b></p> <p>Teacher opens the picture book application with the second option available with greetings. Hi, my friend! Welcome back.</p> <p>There are going to find some initial questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What color does Elmer have? <i>Elmer is multicolored.</i></li><li>• What sound do elephants make? Listen to the options and choose the correct one. Options: <i>Tiger sound, Elephant sound, bird sound.</i></li></ul> <p>Look at the first illustration. Can you describe how the elephants are similar/different?</p>

They are similar or different. Answer: *They are different.*

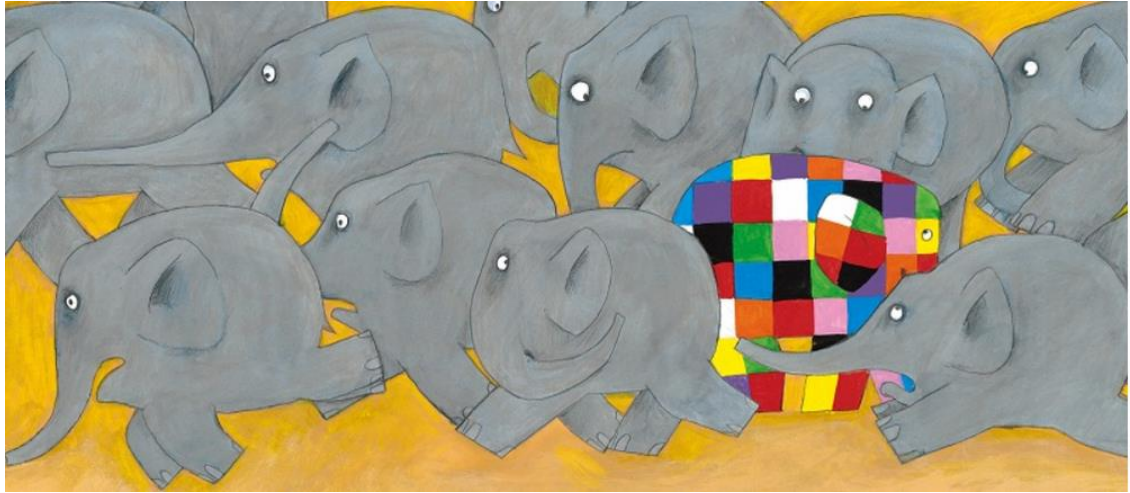


Image taken from: <https://www.jojolearning.com/products/elmer-the-elephant-hua-ge-zi-da-xiang-ai-ma-chinese-children-book-david-mckee>

- **ALL ABOUT ELEPHANTS**

Factual Facts about the elephant's video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CP5uJVpHrVw>

- ✓ What is something that all elephants have? *Trunk. It's great for smelling like your nose. It's a trumpet or snorkel or straw for drinking.*
- ✓ Are elephants big or small? *They are very big. Elephants are the largest animals*
- ✓ How are elephants different from mammoths? *Their thin big ears*

15  
minutes

**While-reading: Reading Aloud**

Students will listen to the story “Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant by David McKee”

YouTube Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUepS9yGANQ>

Own resource created on the platform: Islcollective:

ISL Video <https://en.islcollective.com/english-esl-video-lessons/visual-comprehension/prediction-game/colour/elmer-the-patchwork-elephant-by-david-mckee-read-aloud-2/793897>

Original video link: YouTube Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUepS9yGANQ>

While reading ask questions to students before the story says about:

- How Elmer is different from the others?
- When Elmer was walking back to the herd, why didn't the other animals recognize Elmer? Sample: *Because Elmer looks like the other elephants*
- Why does Elmer feel that something is wrong? – *Free opinion*
- How do you think Elmer feels about being different? – *Free opinion*

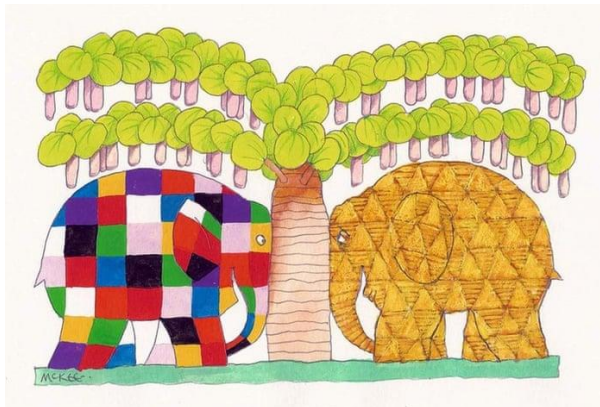
Re-listen to the first part of “Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant by David McKee” Story. Paying attention to how was Elmer feeling

15  
minutes

**Post-reading:**

Students will have 2 interactive activities through the platform. Each one will have feedback

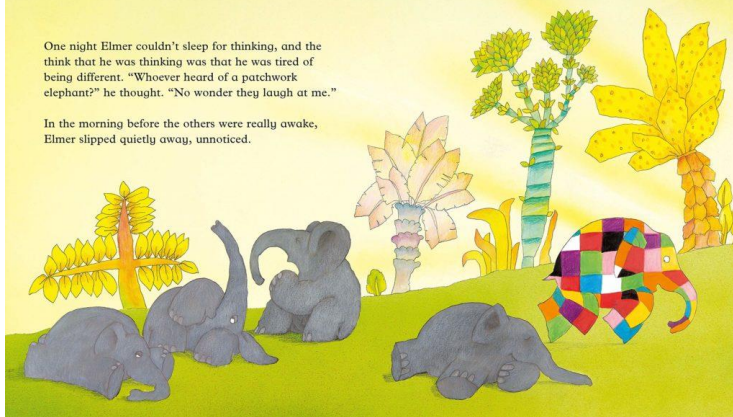
1. Look at the image find the characteristics that make them similar.
  - ✓ Their color
  - ✓ Their body, ears, trunk, legs and tail – *Correct answer*
  - ✓ Their direction
  - ✓ Their skin shapes.



2. Elmer is a unique elephant and it is ok to be different. How did it make it feel? Mark with an X his emotion.

One night Elmer couldn't sleep for thinking, and he thought that he was thinking was that he was tired of being different. "Whoever heard of a patchwork elephant?" he thought. "No wonder they laugh at me."

In the morning before the others were really awake, Elmer slipped quietly away, unnoticed.



- How does he feel about being different? Choose from the options



- How was Elmer feeling when he painted himself with berries?
- How was Elmer feeling when nobody recognizes him?
- How do you think Elmer feels about being different now?
- Have you ever found something that makes you different from others? how does it make you feel?

Once they have finished, they will have a key password to continue they got during the class number: "34" to access at home to the activity.

At home; they should use the app and practice using the app on their own and do reading aloud activity and repeat the activity done in class and complete "at-home activity".

Additionally, they will have the opportunity to review Elmer's characteristics:

1. Drag and complete the characteristics that make Elmer different.



Elmer can: run, jump, play, talk

Elmer has: big ears, squares, a trunk

Elmer is: colorful, fun, playful

Resource adapted from: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Elmer-the-Elephant-Math-and-Literacy-Unit-872631>

2. Help Elmer find the way to his different friends.



Resource adapted from: <https://www.elmer.co.uk/activities/>

3. Parade with Elephants

Ask your parents: What is a parade? Where does it happen?

Students will get a password code to continue to the next level. Code:341

**CYCLE 1:** Let's start our adventure - Awareness and exploration

**LESSON PLAN 3:** Play and celebrate with us

<b>CYCLE 1:</b> Let's start our adventure	<b>LESSON PLAN 3:</b> Play and celebrate with me.	<b>Time: 45 minutes</b>
<b>Objectives:</b>		

- To sensitize students towards reading aloud activity
- To interact with the main character of the story “Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant by David McKee”
- To practice through the digital application to learn.

### Language Contents:

- Greetings
- Party vocabulary: balloons, music, colors, snacks
- Adjectives: young, old, tall, fat, thin, long.
- Color: yellow, orange, red, purple, green, black, white
- My favorite...
- Grammar: I can..., I have..., I am

### Materials:

- Painted Indian elephants
- Picture Book: Elmer by David McKee – PDF
- Genially resource Application
- Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUepS9yGANQ>

### PROCEDURE

<p>TIME 15 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greetings and welcome to the class with class Elephant puppet. Introducing himself.</li> </ul> <p><b>Pre-reading: Observation and recognition</b></p> <p>Teacher will start opening the picture book application with the third section receiving Elmer inviting him to a party. First question: Do you want to celebrate with me? What do we need to have a party? Teacher will give an interesting fact about parties in India through the application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parade of the Painted Elephants – Let’s learn about parades in India.</li> </ul>
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<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/article/painted-elephants>

- Help Elmer find things for the parade –  
Crossword Activity [https://www.educaplay.com/learning-resources/14423221-elmer\\_s\\_parade.html](https://www.educaplay.com/learning-resources/14423221-elmer_s_parade.html)

Elmer's parade

SCORE: 0

TIME: 00:11

N R F D S P R G R A  
 B S M F S M S W A J  
 Q K U L N E R W J C  
 W C S B O R L G G F  
 H A I L O R N K N R  
 H N C T L X K T B I  
 M S T N L T W A D E  
 D P P B A C T I Q N  
 K V J I B D J V Q D  
 A S B O C C O L O R S

1. BALLOONS
2. FRIENDS
3. COLORS
4. SNACKS
5. MUSIC

Resource created on platform “Educaplay” - <https://www.educaplay.com/>

15  
minutes

### While-reading: Reading Aloud

Students will listen to the story “Elmer’s parade by David McKee”

YouTube video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Op3IqaA\\_IUY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Op3IqaA_IUY)

ISL Video: <https://en.islcollective.com/english-esl-video-lessons/visual-comprehension/general-visual-comprehension-practice/going-parties/elmers-parade-level-3/794276>

While reading ask questions to students before the story mentions them:

- ✓ Can you name all the colors on Elmer?
- ✓ Can you shout “Boo” and make someone jump?
- ✓ Can you find six butterflies?
- ✓ How would you make lion laugh?
- ✓ How many different animals can you see? - 9
- ✓ Can you jump across the secret sleeping stones?
- ✓ Can you spot Elmer?

Students will listen to the song

YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMueAavnTE8>

15  
minutes

**Post-reading:**

Students will have the opportunity to answer the following questions through the application with feedback provided through the application.

1. The song says: “Be yourself with everything that you are” What does that mean? Help the frog to discover the meaning.

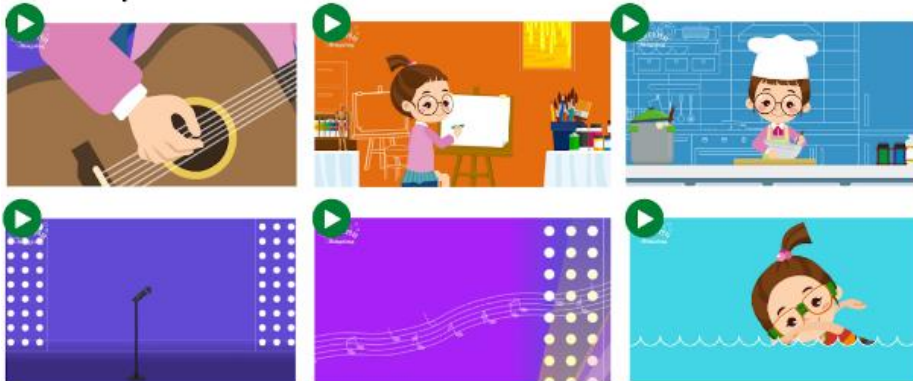
- ✓ What does the butterfly look like? – She is too small - I can fly
- ✓ How was the Lion feeling? He was sad – Lion
- ✓ What can rabbits do? – They can jump
- ✓ What can fish do? – Fish
- ✓ What does it mean “Be yourself with everything that you are”

Resource created in Educaplay: [https://www.educaplay.com/learning-resources/14428832-elmer\\_s\\_parade\\_activity.html](https://www.educaplay.com/learning-resources/14428832-elmer_s_parade_activity.html)

2. What do you do that nobody else can do? Look at the following examples and try to discover what makes you unique.

- ✓ I can play guitar
- ✓ I can paint
- ✓ I can cook
- ✓ I can sing
- ✓ I can dance
- ✓ I can swim

**Examples: I can ...**

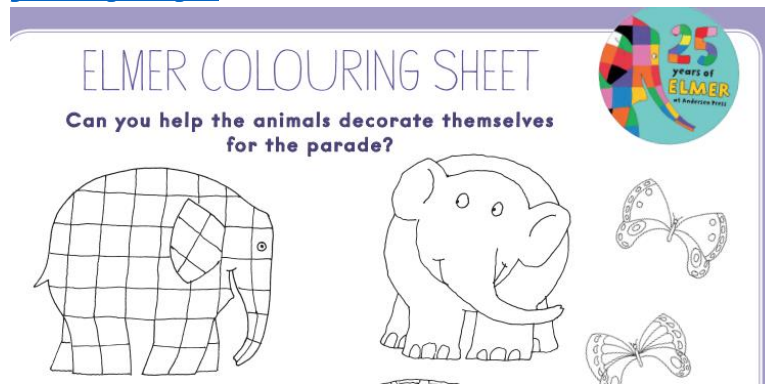


Resource adapted from: Moreno et al. How can we foster Literacy when Teaching English to Young Learners? - English emphasis: Teaching English to young learners

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EseVn58IZMNQbjKk1z9iOqQnoGtuf02d/edit> -.

3. Elmer's Parade: Can you help the animals decorate themselves for the parade? Elephants with different shapes, butterflies, giraffe, crocodile, tiger

Resource adapted from: <https://booksabouttown.org.uk/img/uploads/elmer25-parade-pack.pdf>



Once they have finished, they will have a key password to continue they got during the class number: “21” to access at home to the activity.

At home; they should use the app and practice using the app on their own and do reading aloud activity and repeat the activity done in class and complete “at-home activity”.

At home, students will have access to the previous lesson activities and today's class additionally, they will have the opportunity to review the Elmer party

- Watch a video about Elmer's party:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMueAavnTE8>
- Be a rainbow. You can have different colors. Color the rainbow.  
“Some things you can give and give and not lose any. Things like happiness or love or your colors” Elmer and the rainbow.

Resource adapted from:

<https://wordunited.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/EY-ART018-colour-in-elmer-rainbow-v2.pdf>

- Ask your parents: Which parades are in your country?

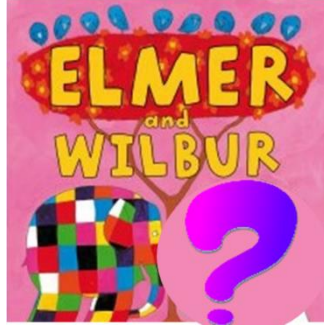
Students will get a password code to continue to the next level. Code:214

**CYCLE 2:** Let’s feel the story- Experimental Reading

**LESSON PLAN 1:** Elmer’s cousin

<b>CYCLE 2:</b> Let’s feel the story- Experimental Reading	<b>LESSON PLAN 1:</b> Elmer’s cousin	<b>Time: 45 minutes</b>
<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To provide opportunities to experiment with reading and start writing.</li><li>• To identify the new character of the story “Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee”</li><li>• To interact with the digital application to learn.</li><li>• To start reading by themselves the story and provide meaning to it.</li></ul>		
<b>Language Contents:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Greetings</li><li>• Family members</li><li>• Elephant: big ears, long nose, big belly, stinky toes, little tail, two round eyes, big</li><li>• Actions: stop, wiggle, turn around, walk, stop, run,</li></ul>		
<b>Materials:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Picture Book: Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee - Book</li><li>• Picture Book application through Genially resource</li><li>• Video Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee – reading aloud: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9N_X6lgxIA&amp;t=34s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9N_X6lgxIA&amp;t=34s</a></li><li>• Elephants’ song with actions</li></ul>		

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	
<b>TIME</b> 15 minutes	<b>Pre-reading: Observation and recognition</b>  Teacher will present the picture book application with the second cycle part unlocked to greet Elmer. Hi, my friend! Welcome back  First question: Can you guess who is hidden.



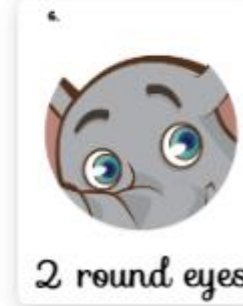
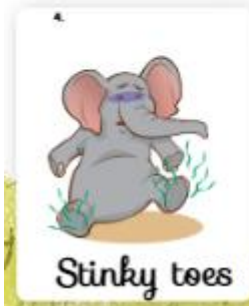
Teacher will let students try to guess who is hidden? – Family member's names  
Can you guess: Who is he? What does he/she look like?

Elephants' song with actions: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u\\_MaD54TAqk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_MaD54TAqk)  
Lyrics in the Annex

Resource adapted from:

<https://mapleleaflearning.com/library/files/educator/flashcards/the-elephant-dance-song-flashcards.pdf>

1. Practice the actions



Resource adapted from

<https://mapleleaflearning.com/library/files/educator/flashcards/the-elephant-dance-song-flashcards.pdf>

2. Listen to the song and learn the actions.

15  
minutes

**While-reading: Individual Reading Activity**

	<p>Students will check the book and try to read the story by their own. Picture Book: Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee - Book through the app.  Link: Resource adapted:  <a href="https://read.bookcreator.com/j07m1XbmtkTR0SwmLih3CR93qu1/4pywDOqZSq25WrUjo-nEZA">https://read.bookcreator.com/j07m1XbmtkTR0SwmLih3CR93qu1/4pywDOqZSq25WrUjo-nEZA</a></p> <p>Teacher will ask questions to identify their understanding.  What happened in the story? Who is Elmer’s friend? Where was he hidden?</p> <p>Then together will listen to the reading aloud-story. While reading ask questions to students before the story says: How different are Elmer and Wilbur?  YouTube video: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9N_X6lgxIA&amp;t=91s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9N_X6lgxIA&amp;t=91s</a></p> <p>1.</p>
<p>15 minutes</p>	<p><b>Post-reading:</b></p> <p>Students will have to answer questions through the application. Each one will have feedback and corresponding activity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Elmer and Wilbur are cousins. Think about the different family members that different families have. Draw a family tree showing the people in your family?</li> <li>2. Monitor for Visual Cues – Make an error reading and ask a student what the error was in the story.</li> </ol> <p>Once they have finished, they will have a clue “My friend Elmer” to access at home to the activity.  At home, they should use the app and practice using the app on their own and do reading aloud activity and repeat the activity done in class and complete “at-home activity”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Elmer thinks that Wilbur might be lost at the start of the story. Help Elmer find Wilbur and his friends.</li> <li>4. Look on a map and identify places where elephants might live in the wild.</li> <li>5. Find the location of zoos in your local area that have elephants there. Can you play a visit to see them?</li> </ol>

**CYCLE 2:** Let’s feel the story- Experimental Reading

**LESSON PLAN 2:** How different we are!

<b>CYCLE 2:</b> Let's feel the story- Experimental Reading	<b>LESSON PLAN 2:</b> How different we are!	<b>Time: 45 minutes</b>
<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide opportunities to experiment with reading and start writing.</li> <li>• To identify differences between the characters of the story “Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee”</li> <li>• To interact with the digital application to learn.</li> <li>• To organize simple narrative stories.</li> </ul>		
<b>Language Contents:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greetings</li> <li>• Colors</li> <li>• Shapes</li> <li>• Opposites</li> </ul>		
<b>Materials:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Picture Book: Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee – PDF</li> <li>• Picture Book application through Genially resource</li> <li>• Video Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee video – reading aloud - <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9N_X6lgxIA&amp;t=34s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9N_X6lgxIA&amp;t=34s</a></li> </ul>		

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	
TIME 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greetings and welcome to the class with the Elephants song with actions: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nY3N_j6KmNE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nY3N_j6KmNE</a> Lyrics in the Annex</li> </ul> <p><b>Pre-reading: Observation, recognition.</b></p> <p>Teacher will present the picture book application with the second cycle part unlocked to greet Elmer. Hi, my friend! Welcome back</p>
15 minutes	<p><b>While-reading: Reading Aloud</b></p> <p>Students will check the book and try to read the story on their own. Picture Book: Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee - Book through the app.</p>

Teacher will ask questions to identify their understanding.

How different are Wilbur and Elmer?

Link: Resource adapted:

<https://read.bookcreator.com/j07m1XbmtkTR0SwmLih3CR93qu1/4pywDOqZSq25WrUjo-nEZA>

Then together will listen to the reading aloud story. While reading ask questions to students before the story says: Are you different from your partners?

YouTube video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9N\\_X6lgxIA&t=91s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9N_X6lgxIA&t=91s)

20  
minutes

**Post-reading:**

Students will have to answer 3 questions through the application. Each one will have feedback

1. Drag the word and match with the picture

Tiger's rock

Pound reflection

Rabbit hole

Be up a tree

2. Roll and chat your way to understanding- with questions about the story





Resource adapted from:

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/FREEBIE-Roll-and-Chat-Reading-Comprehension-Dice-Game-1025872>

3. The illustrations of the story show lots of different types of trees. Draw your own unusual trees. Could you work with a friend to create a jungle full of weird and wonderful trees?

At home, they should use the app and practice using the app on their own and do reading aloud activity and repeat the activity done in class and complete “at-home activity”

- Elmer Word Search



- Wilbur likes to play tricks on people. Why isn't this a very nice thing to do?

Farewell to the class: Time to say goodbye!

**CYCLE 2:** Let’s feel the story- Experimental Reading

**LESSON PLAN 3:** The story

<b>CYCLE 2:</b> Let’s feel the story- Experimental Reading	<b>LESSON PLAN 3:</b> The story	<b>Time: 45 minutes</b>
<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To provide opportunities to experiment with reading and start writing.</li><li>• To identify the character of the story “Elmer</li><li>• To interact with the digital application to learn.</li><li>• To retell simple narrative stories.</li></ul>		

**Language Contents:**

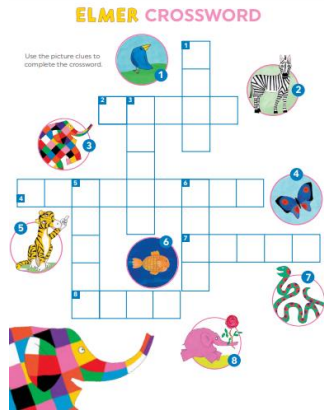
- Greetings
- Animals: elephant, tiger, rabbits, birds.
- Settings: tree, lake, rabbit hole.

**Materials:**

- Picture Book: Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee – PDF
- Picture Book application through Genially resource

**PROCEDURE**

<p>TIME 10 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greetings and welcome to the class with a new Hokey Pokey Song <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouh8EZwtIvM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouh8EZwtIvM</a> Lyrics in the Annex</li> </ul> <p><b>Pre-reading: Observation, recognition.</b></p> <p>Teacher will present the picture book application with the second cycle part unlocked to greet Elmer. Hi my friend! Welcome back</p>
<p>15 minutes</p>	<p><b>While-reading: Reading Aloud</b></p> <p>Students will listen to the story “Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee” YouTube video: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9N_X6lgxIA&amp;t=91s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9N_X6lgxIA&amp;t=91s</a></p> <p>While reading ask questions to students before the story says: Who is the main character in the story?</p>
<p>20 minutes</p>	<p><b>Post-reading:</b></p> <p>Students will have to answer 3 questions through the application. Each one will have feedback</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Elmer Crossword with the characters of the story:</li> </ol>



2. Determine the setting, characters and problem of the story. Organize with the sequence: Activity through Application



3. Write the story that explains how Wilbur got up the tree in the first place.

Once they have finished, they will have a clue “My friend Elmer” to access at home to the activity.

At home, they should use the app and practice using the app on their own and do reading aloud activity and repeat the activity done in class and complete “at-home activity”

- Wilbur is a ventriloquist. Can you record your own voice and pretend to be different people/animals?

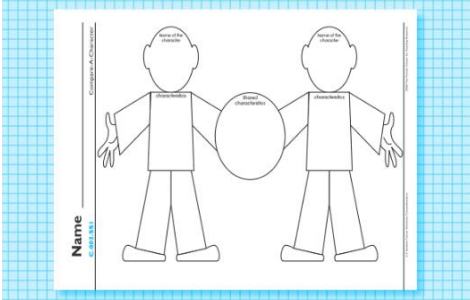
Farewell to the class: Time to say goodbye!

**CYCLE 3:** Let’s do it by yourself - Early reading and writing

**LESSON PLAN 1:** Favorite Character

<b>CYCLE 3:</b> Let's do it by yourself	<b>LESSON PLAN 1:</b> Favorite Character	<b>Time: 45 minutes</b>
<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide the opportunity to create new stories based on the stories read.</li> <li>• To determine the main character of the story</li> <li>• To get confident using the digital application to learn.</li> <li>• To read and retell familiar stories.</li> </ul>		
<b>Language Contents:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greetings</li> <li>• Family members</li> <li>• Animals: Elephant, tiger, rabbit, monkey, snake.</li> <li>• Adjectives: big ears, long nose, big belly, stinky toes, little tail, two round eyes, big</li> </ul>		
<b>Materials:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Picture Books: Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee or Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant by David McKee</li> <li>• Picture Book application through Genially resource</li> </ul>		

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	
TIME 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greetings and welcome to the class with two big pictures one from Elmer and the other from Wilbur.</li> </ul> <p><b>Pre-reading: Observation and recognition.</b></p> <p>Teacher will start with the picture book application on the second cycle part unlocked to greet Elmer and Wilbur. Hi, my friend! Welcome back.</p> <p>First question: Let's choose your favorite story.</p> <p>Teacher will ask students about the two stories we have read. Which is your favorite story? Why?</p>
15 minutes	<b>While-reading: Individual Reading Activity</b>

	<p>Students will read the picture book they have chosen as their favorite. The application will display both picture books: <b>Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee</b> or <b>Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant by David McKee</b></p> <p>They will have the option to read it on their own or watch the read-aloud video</p> <p>Once they have finished Teacher will ask questions to identify their preferences. Who is your favorite character? What do you like the most about this story? What is your favorite part of the story?</p> <p>Then in groups according to the story, they will retell the story with their partners.</p>
<p>20 minutes</p>	<p><b>Post-reading:</b></p> <p>Students will have to answer questions through the application. Each one will have feedback and corresponding activity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Choose your favorite character. Type or record why is your favorite one.</li> <li>2. Compare your character – Describe the internal attributes to choose the best one.</li> </ol>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. What do you recognize from yourself in this character?</li> <li>4. Make a drawing of yourself and your favorite character.</li> </ol> <p>At home, they should use the app and practice using the app on their own and do reading aloud activity and repeat the activity done in class and complete “at-home activity”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Story Elements: Record yourself saying the character and retelling the story.</li> </ol> <p>Farewell to the class: Time to say goodbye!</p>

**CYCLE 3:** Let’s do it by yourself - Early reading and writing

**LESSON PLAN 2:** Favorite Setting

<b>CYCLE 3:</b> Let's do it by yourself	<b>LESSON PLAN 2:</b> Favorite Setting	<b>Time: 45 minutes</b>
<b>Objectives:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide the opportunity to create new stories based on the stories read.</li> <li>• To describe the setting and different places of the story</li> <li>• To get confident using the digital application to learn.</li> <li>• To read and retell familiar stories.</li> </ul>		
<b>Language Contents:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greetings</li> <li>• Places to live: forest, lake, trees.</li> </ul>		
<b>Materials:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Picture Books: Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee or Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant by David McKee</li> <li>• Picture Book application through Genially resource</li> </ul>		

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	
TIME 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greetings and welcome to the class with two big pictures one from Elmer and the other from Wilbur.</li> </ul> <p><b>Pre-reading: Observation and recognition.</b></p> <p>Teacher will start with the picture book application on the second cycle part unlocked to greet Elmer and Wilbur. Hi, my friend! Welcome back.</p> <p>First question: Let's choose your favorite place.</p> <p>Teacher will ask students about the two stories we have read. Where did the story happen?</p>
15 minutes	<p><b>While-reading: Individual Reading Activity</b></p> <p>Students will read the picture book they have chosen as their favorite. The application will display both picture books: <b>Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee or Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant by David McKee</b></p>

	<p>They will have the option to read it on their own or watch the read-aloud video</p> <p>Once they have finished the teacher will ask questions to identify their preferences. What are the places where the story happened? Describe them.</p> <p>Then in groups according to the story they will retell the story with their partners considering the places.</p>
<p>20 minutes</p>	<p><b>Post-reading:</b></p> <p>Students will have to answer questions through the application. Each one will have feedback and corresponding activity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. True or false questions about the places. The setting of the stories include trees of different colors and different animals.</li> <li>2. Illustrate the problem and the solution</li> </ol> <div data-bbox="430 823 773 1098" data-label="Form"> </div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Order in sequence the story you would like to create according to the setting and some characters.</li> </ol> <p>At home, they should use the app and practice using the app on their own and do reading aloud activity and repeat the activity done in class and complete “at-home activity”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where does a story with elephants could happen. Choose the best one and get more information about it.</li> </ul> <p>Farewell to the class: Time to say goodbye!</p>

**CYCLE 3:** Let’s do it by yourself - Early reading and writing

**LESSON PLAN 3:** My new version of Elmer

<p><b>CYCLE 3:</b> Let’s do it by yourself</p>	<p><b>LESSON PLAN 3:</b> My new version of Elmer</p>	<p><b>Time: 45 minutes</b></p>
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**Objectives:**

- To provide the opportunity to create new stories based on the stories read.
- To get confident using the digital application to learn.
- To read and retell familiar stories.

**Language Contents:**

- Greetings
- Places to live: forest, lake, trees.
- Animals: Elephant, tiger, rabbit, monkey, snake.
- Adjectives: big ears, long nose, big belly, stinky toes, little tail, two round eyes, big

**Materials:**

- Picture Books: Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee or Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant by David McKee
- Picture Book application through Genially resource

**PROCEDURE**

<p>TIME 10 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greetings and welcome to the class with two big pictures one from Elmer and the other from Wilbur.</li> </ul> <p><b>Pre-reading: Observation and recognition.</b></p> <p>Teacher will start with the picture book application on the second cycle part unlocked to greet Elmer and Wilbur. Hi, my friend! Welcome back.</p> <p>First question: Let's add our story to Elmer's</p> <p>Teacher will ask students about the two stories we have read. What do you want to happen next?</p>
<p>15 minutes</p>	<p><b>While-reading: Individual Reading Activity</b></p> <p>Students will read the picture book they have chosen as their favorite. The application will display both picture books: <b>Elmer and Wilbur by David McKee or Elmer - The Patchwork Elephant by David McKee</b></p> <p>They will have the option to read it on their own or watch the read-aloud video</p>



	<p>Once they have finished Teacher will ask questions to identify their preferences. What would happen if Elmer were gray as his brothers? Would you like to be part of the story?</p> <p>Then in groups according to the story, they will retell the story with their partners considering the places.</p>
20 minutes	<p><b>Post-reading:</b></p> <p>Students will have to answer questions through the application. Each one will have feedback and corresponding activity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Draw the part you want to change or add.</li><li>2. Record yourself reading the new part of story you want to add.</li></ol> <p>At home, they should use the app and practice using the app on their own and do reading aloud activity and repeat the activity done in class and complete “at-home activity”</p> <p>Farewell to the class: Time to say goodbye!</p>

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

This didactic and pedagogical proposal looks to offer an alternative to promote Early EFL reading comprehension in young learners through the “PicBook app” implementing blended learning mode as a way to integrate technology into the English language learning process in public schools, as seen throughout the previous chapters. This final chapter presents the implications and conclusions that result from the design of the present proposal. Lastly, some limitations and further research suggestions will be provided.

### **Implications and conclusions**

The process of developing this proposal entails certain implications for the field of education, for the students that can use the resource, as well as for parents who can participate in the process of education, and finally for me as a pre-service teacher.

To begin with, it is important to mention the implications for the field of education since it represents a transformation in teaching and learning practices. First, it is necessary to focus on fostering early reading comprehension skills in young learners in order to prepare students for future challenges in their reading process and develop their awareness of being citizens of the world. This can be done by incorporating engaging and meaningful material, such as picture books, into the curriculum before students begin to develop their literacy skills. Reading is a skill that should be cultivated from an early age and should not be overlooked.

Second, education establishments must adopt a new perspective toward technological integration in English classes. The covid-19 has demonstrated the need to reevaluate and adapt educational methodologies, giving technology a significant role, recognizing its potential, and adjusting to learners' needs in a world where it is prevalent and demands modern technical skills.

As such, there is an important request for government and educational institutions to invest in technology and provide schools with the resources they require to genuinely incorporate it into the teaching and learning process. Also, it is necessary to have qualified teachers able to understand, integrate and innovate with ICTs. It is not enough to have a technologically advanced classroom if the teachers are not equipped to successfully adapt the curriculum by taking advantage of technology. There is a distinction between having physical access to technology and actually using it, as Velasquez (2013) points out. Teachers must certainly acquire skills that enable them to determine when and how to employ different technologies, as well as have a critical perspective on their use. A teacher can use ICTs in the classroom in meaningful and creative ways only when they fully understand their advantages and disadvantages.

Therefore, the lessons and activities in this proposal were designed to be applied using technological devices and network tools. Although most of the activities have the possibility of being carried out in synchronous or in-person classes, the development of the class implies that either students or institutions need to have computers with reliable Internet access. This will allow learners to see, participate in, and put into practice the tasks proposed. Moreover, this kind of platform with interactive resources serves as a support tool that facilitates the students to learn English as a foreign language by boosting their motivation, unconsciously fostering technological literacy, and increasing their exposure to the language outside of the classroom.

All in all, teachers need to be able to adapt in order to accommodate the pace of each learner while letting them explore. They must be constant observers, guiding and identifying potential situations that could arise during the learning process. Finally, educators need to be creative to foster autonomy by providing meaningful learning experiences through platform use.

Concerning the implications for students, it is crucial to recognize that the ideal implementation of the project presented implies that students acknowledge that learning English can be done through a variety of resources, and that reading comprehension could build an understanding of the world not only of stories and adventures but also the world around them. In order to accomplish the desired results, students must actively participate in their learning. Pupils must understand that they are the owners of the process, and that knowledge does not only reside in the teacher, allowing them to develop their autonomy. According to Cotterall (1995), autonomous learners are probably individuals who have overcome any obstacles that their educational background, societal expectations, or prior experiences may have placed in their path. The application is intended to integrate and promote the aforementioned elements, and as users' complete missions, they can keep track of their own use of learning strategies. Indeed, every cycle was constructed to allow students to exercise their autonomy and self-assess their learning.

On the other hand, this innovative proposal considers the parent's role as crucial to complement school instruction. In fact, each lesson plan contemplates a profile for parents that includes a section on at-home activities. The most significant implication is that parents can support their children's EFL learning by providing information, building learning conditions by bringing materials, time, and resources. Due to the fact that parents and schools can support one another and enhance the learning process, it is essential to foster a collaborative relationship between them. Walker et al. (2004) confirmed that work at home can be a powerful instrument for letting parents and other adults know what the child is learning and giving teachers an opportunity to hear from parents about the children's progress, in that way, they can monitor and guide if it is necessary.

Finally, the implication for me as a pre-service teacher who designed the pedagogical innovation proposal, was the development of a strong perspective toward technology since I had to learn about various digital platforms. It was necessary to look for instruction and research the best methods for selecting the most accurate resources that achieve the different learning goals. This project highlights a challenge to innovate and understand learning from a different perspective in order to help the creation of an effective instructional process. Since this project is still in progress, adjustments and changes may be necessary depending on the EFL classroom in which it will be used. As a result, the current plan only serves as a beginning point and not a final version. This could help to strengthen the execution of another kind of project within EFL education.

### **Limitations**

The design of this project has shown that it is important to consider the current context and circumstances in which it is presented since its execution was limited by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was challenging to carry out a detailed approximation of an actual educational environment because of the limited access to execute projects in educational institutions and the insufficient time to observe, design and implement the project. However, this is a great opportunity to think about innovative techniques for tackling education outside of traditional classroom settings within the Colombian educational system.

It's also possible that access to tools and technology will be restricted. Additionally, the majority of public institutions in the country do not have computer rooms, which prevents users from interacting with the intended resource. On the other hand, some students might not have access to technological resources at home for a variety of reasons that cannot be addressed in the classroom, which could have an impact on the expected learning outcomes.

The last limitation might be related to the student's language level because it might be difficult for them to comprehend the instructions and the application's content. This can lead to difficulties in utilizing the application effectively, which may have a negative impact on their learning process and their motivation. Additionally, children might require further guidance from teachers or peers, which can increase the amount of time needed to complete a task. As a result, teachers need to assess each student's language proficiency and offer the appropriate support to guarantee equal access to digital learning opportunities.

### **Further research**

To sum up, further research is required to fully grasp the significance of using ICTs to innovate in language learning, combining strategies like blended learning and maximizing the potential of already existing materials like picture books. The first step would be to put this proposal into practice in a real setting to assess its effectiveness in a classroom setting. These findings can be used to guide future research into how well the application and traditional classroom teaching techniques compare in terms of enhancing EFL students' reading comprehension abilities. Another significant one is the investigation of EFL students' attitudes and perceptions toward using the application and the effect it has on their reading motivation and engagement. Finally, this initiative might be seen as a starting point for further investigation into how to promote early semiotic analysis incorporating digital resources and picture books in blended mode to boost critical reading in pupils in the primary grades. Students are being saturated with countless images in all directions on a daily basis. If we focus on the development of analytical skills from early ages, learners will have the tools to look beyond what is shown to them.

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