



Universitat d'Alacant
Universidad de Alicante

**Memorias del Programa
de Redes-I3CE de calidad,
innovación e investigación
en docencia universitaria**

Convocatoria
2020-21

**Memòries del Programa
de Xarxes-I3CE de qualitat,
innovació i investigació
en docència universitària**

Convocatòria
2020-21



Satorre Cuerda, Rosana (Coordinación)
Menargues Marcilla, María Asunción; Díez Ros, Rocío; Pellín Buades, Neus (Eds.)

UA

UNIVERSITAT D'ALACANT
UNIVERSIDAD DE ALICANTE

Vicerectorat de Transformació Digital
Vicerrectorado de Transformación Digital
Institut de Ciències de l'Educació
Instituto de Ciencias de la Educación

Memorias del Programa de Redes-I3CE de calidad, innovación e investigación en docencia universitaria. Convocatoria 2020-21 / Memòries del Programa de Xarxes-I3CE de qualitat, innovació i investigació en docència universitària. Convocatòria 2020-21

Organització: Institut de Ciències de l'Educació (Vicerectorat de Transformació Digital) de la Universitat d'Alacant/ *Organización: Instituto de Ciencias de la Educación (Vicerrectorado de Transformación Digital) de la Universidad de Alicante*

Edició / *Edición*: Rosana Satorre Cuerda (Coord.), Asunción Menargues Marcillas, Rocío Díez Ros, Neus Pellin Buades

Revisió i maquetació: ICE de la Universitat d'Alacant/ *Revisión y maquetación: ICE de la Universidad de Alicante*

Primera edició / *Primera edición*: desembre 2021/ diciembre 2021

© De l'edició/ *De la edición*: Rosana Satorre Cuerda, Asunción Menargues Marcillas, Rocío Díez Ros & Neus Pellin Buades

© Del text: les autores i autors / *Del texto: las autoras y autores*

© D'aquesta edició: Universitat d'Alacant / *De esta edición: Universidad de Alicante*

ice@ua.es

Memorias del Programa de Redes-I3CE de calidad, innovación e investigación en docencia universitaria. Convocatoria 2020-21 / Memòries del Programa de Xarxes-I3CE de qualitat, innovació i investigació en docència universitària. Convocatòria 2020-21 © 2021 by Universitat d'Alacant / Universidad de Alicante is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) 

ISBN: 978-84-09-34941-8

Qualsevol forma de reproducció, distribució, comunicació pública o transformació d'aquesta obra només pot ser realitzada amb l'autorització dels seus titulars, llevat de les excepcions previstes per la llei. Adreceu-vos a CEDRO (Centro Español de Derechos Reprográficos, www.cedro.org) si necessiteu fotocopiar o escanejar algun fragment d'aquesta obra. / *Cualquier forma de reproducción, distribución, comunicación pública o transformación de esta obra sólo puede ser realizada con la autorización de sus titulares, salvo excepción prevista por la ley. Diríjase a CEDRO (Centro Español de Derechos Reprográficos, www.cedro.org) si necesita fotocopiar o escanear algún fragmento de esta obra.*

Producció: Institut de Ciències de l'Educació (ICE) de la Universitat d'Alacant / *Producción: Instituto de Ciencias de la Educación (ICE) de la Universidad de Alicante*

Aquesta publicació s'ha fet seguint les directrius d'accessibilitat UNE-EN 301549:2020 / Esta publicación se ha hecho siguiendo las directrices de accesibilidad UNE-EN 301549:2020.

EDITORIAL: Les opinions i continguts dels treballs publicats en aquesta obra són de responsabilitat exclusiva de les autores i dels autors. / *Las opiniones y contenidos de los trabajos publicados en esta obra son de responsabilidad exclusiva de las autoras y de los autores.*

167.Literacy skills: phonics in the pre-primary classroom

Fernández Molina; Javier. Mollá Díez; María Teresa. Sánchez Quero; Manuel. Mateo Guillén; Copelia. Miralles Alberola; Dolores. Alonso Valls; Elena. Navas Castillo; Carlos

javierfmolina@ua.es, tresa.molla@gcloud.ua.es, ms.quero@ua.es,
copelia.mateo@ua.es, lolamiralles@ua.es, elena.alonso@ua.es,
carlosnavas@ua.es

Departamento de Innovación y Formación Didáctica

Universidad de Alicante

Miquel Abril; Ana Belén

ana.miquel@ua.es

Biblioteca Facultad de Educación

Universidad de Alicante

García Cubillo; Victoria Coral

jollyrevolution@gmail.com

Jolly Learning co. UK

Vidal Reyes; Raquel

raquel.vidal.reyes@gmail.com

CEIP San Roque

Generalitat Valenciana, Conserjería de Educación

Abstract

There is a plethora of manuals aiming to provide a rationale and suggestions to preservice and graduate teachers when planning and evaluating a literature-based curriculum. English adds an enormous difficulty for the particular characteristics of its phonetic system, generating struggle in learners (Levis & Grant, 2003; Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011). The phoneme-grapheme correspondence in English is perceived as ambiguous, especially by non-native speakers (Wyse & Goswami, 2008). Research has proven that synthetic phonics training prompts a faster acquisition of reading skills and a more transparent orthography (Ibarrola, 2007). The specific objective of this study is to gain an insight into the perceptions of prospective teachers with regards to the use of phonics, decodables and children's literature for the teaching of literacy. A mixed-methods approach (Bryman, 2012) was chosen to triangulate findings. The quantitative data were collected by a 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire, while open-ended questions gathered the qualitative data. The convenient sample were 89 students from the English literacy skills subject. Results indicate that pre-service teachers acknowledge children's book may not be the main resource to teach pronunciation and literacy. Also, they received positively the phonics methodology, which was largely new to them as well as the use of decodables.

Palabras clave: Literacy, pronunciation, phonics, decodables, children's literature

1. Introduction

Concerning the use of literature in the English classroom, Russell & Andersson (2019) remark, "children's literature provides an excellent opportunity for teachers to develop an appreciation for the art of literature and an understanding of how literature reflects our world and ourselves" (p. xvi). In turn, Huck (1993) highlights the triple focus of children's books: the reader, the book, and teaching. However,

at early stages and in the context of English as a foreign language, children literature may be approached in its cultural artistic value or as a means to introduce literacy skills. In this regard, Celce-Murcia & McIntosh (2001) clearly established that at the very initial stages of learning the mechanics of writing helped learners to establish a good basis in sound-spelling correspondences.

2. Objectives

Within the undergraduate degrees of primary education and pre-primary education, prospective teachers can select the literacy skills module (codes 17012 and 17553 respectively) where a comprehensive instruction of phonetics and phonics is delivered. The course resorts to the most widely accepted approaches to the teaching of phonetics and synthetic phonics. However, the issue of which children books to choose in the daily practice, once phonics has been achieved, and how prospective teachers deem literature shall be utilized in the classroom remains unclear.

There is ample literature supporting the use of Phonics (Ehri et al., 2001; Johnston & Watson, 2005; de Graaff et al., 2009; White, 2017), being this methodology the compulsory means to teach English literacy in England since 2007:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190599/Letters and Sounds - DFES-00281-2007.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190599/Letters_and_Sounds_-_DFES-00281-2007.pdf).

Nevertheless, the syllabi at our university clearly state that the use of traditional literature should be resorted to when teaching literacy. Thus, it was the aim of this research network to identify the extent to which third-year and fourth-year prospective teachers, specialists in English and many already experienced in teaching English, would deem suit for purpose the use of decodables, phonics and traditional children literature after the specific instruction received.

3. Method

3.1. Description of the context and of the participants

The convenient sample encompassed 89 students belonging to two groups of the Literacy skills course. This course joins preservice students from the degrees of pre-primary and primary education. Other courses which may affect the investigation taken by the members of the sample are their final degree dissertation, a 5000-word academic paper written in English, and the school apprenticeship period with the English specialist as a tutor.

3.2. Instrument utilized to assess the education experience

In order to assess the educative experience, the research network decided to conduct a mixed-methods research. To attain 'Trustworthiness' (Bryman, 2016), the concepts of 'internal validity' and 'confirmability' were applied to the design of the investigation.

As for the 'data collection method', a 5-point Likert questionnaire was designed. 'Triangulation' (Deacon et al, 1998) was achieved for more than one method was utilized. In that regard, open-ended questions were added to the questionnaire so that students could provide a more detailed account of their perception towards pronunciation, phonics, decodables and children literature. The qualitative data and the participants' narratives were labelled and stored for scrutiny and analysis.

3.3. Description of the experience

Within the normal development of the course, prospective teachers must create their own phonics programme called EDUCAPHONICS UA PROJECT comprising activities of all 5 phonics skills. It accounts for 40% of their final mark. Apart from that assessed task, students participated in class activities (performed in a dual manner due to the Covid-19 restrictions) which were stored and shared in two Padlets. That permitted iterative cycles to be conducted, enabling the addition of further theory to the research in an abductive fashion (Blaikie, 2004; Charmaz, 2006).

4. Results

Table 1. Main findings from the quantitative data

Item	Question	Mean (1-5)	SD	
			G1	G2
2	If you cannot pronounce it, you cannot write it	3.25	1.12	0.98
5	PHONICS are/can be a good way for teaching English	4.63	0.48	0.66
7	Phonics can ONLY be used in pre-primary education and in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year of primary	1.81	0.58	1.19
8	Phonics can be used in the second stage of primary education	4.03	0.81	1.19
10	Decodables are a good way to teach to read and write	4.23	0.61	0.87
12	Decodables can ONLY be used in pre-primary education and in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year of primary	2.29	0.81	0.89
13	Decodables can be used in the second stage of primary education	3.84	0.81	1.14
14	Traditional children's books are a GOOD way to teach children to read and write	3.16	1.00	1.02
15	Traditional children's books are THE ONLY WAY to teach children to read and write	1.47	0.61	0.40
SD: Standard Deviation; G1 & G2: group 1 & group 2				

Source: the autors

The mean in items 2, 5, 8, 10, 13, 14 go in the direction of the predictions of the researchers, for a mean closer to 5 is to be regarded as confirmatory. Contrariwise, the manner questions 7, 12 and 15 were posed required a means closer as possible to 1. Item 12 proves the highest discrepancy in participants' responses.

With regards to the standard deviation, the discrepancies observed between group 1 and group 2 might have been caused by the particulars of each of them. Group 1 encompassed 32 participants as compared to 10 participants in group 2. Also, all contestants in group 2 were experienced teachers while in group 1

only 66% had teaching experience. From the initial sample of 89 students, 42 handed in the questionnaire, since there were continuous reminders that only those who were aiming at becoming English experts in their schools and were also interested in the topic were to respond the questionnaire.

5. Conclusions

All in all, prospective teachers acknowledge the importance of teaching pronunciation at early stages, while the phonics methodology is largely well received at early stages. Nevertheless, hesitation arises concerning its utility in the last three years of primary education. Also, children's books are perceived as not the main resource for teaching literacy. The qualitative data obtained will be developed in an additional article.

6. Tasks within the research network

Member of the research network	Tasks performed
Javier Fernández Molina	Design of the investigation, design of the questionnaire, analysis of the results and writing of the final paper
María Teresa Mollá Díez	Design of the investigation, design of the questionnaire and analysis of the results
Manuel Sánchez Quero	Review of the questionnaire and analysis of the results.
Copelia Guillén Mateo	Design of the investigation, review of the questionnaire and analysis of the results.
Dolores Miralles Alberola	Review of the questionnaire and analysis of the results.

Elena Alonso Valls	Review of the questionnaire and analysis of the results.
Carlos Navas Castillo	Design of the investigation, review of the questionnaire and analysis of the results.
Ana Belén Miquel Abril	Design of the investigation, creation of a specific section in the library devoted to decodables and phonics material
Victoria Coral García Cubillo	Provided expertise as phonics trainer. Design of the investigation and of the questionnaire.
Raquel Vidal Reyes	Primary class experience necessary to design the investigation, analysis of the results.

7. References

Blaikie, N. (2004). 'Abduction', in M. S. Lewis-Beck, A. Bryman, and T. F. Liao (eds), *The Sage Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods*. 3 vols. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4. ed. ed.). Oxford Univ. Press.

Celce-Murcia, M. (2001). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (3. ed. ed.). Heinle & Heinle.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory*. SAGE Publications.

de Graaff, S., Bosman, A. M. T., Hasselman, F., & Verhoeven, L. (2009). Benefits of Systematic Phonics Instruction. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 13(4), 318-333. <https://10.1080/10888430903001308>

Deacon, D., Bryman, A., & Fenton, N. (1998). Collision or collusion? A discussion and case study of the unplanned triangulation of quantitative and qualitative research methods. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 1(1), 47-63. <https://10.1080/13645579.1998.10846862>

Ehri, L. C., Nunes, S. R., Stahl, S. A., & Willows, D. M. (2001). Systematic Phonics Instruction Helps Students Learn to Read: Evidence from the National Reading Panel's Meta-Analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 71(3), 393-447. <https://10.3102/00346543071003393>

Gilakjani, A., Ahmadi, S., & Ahmadi, M. (2011). Why Is Pronunciation So Difficult to Learn? *English Language Teaching (Toronto)*, 4(3), 74. <https://10.5539/elt.v4n3p74>

Huck, C. S., Hepler, S., & Hickman, J. (1993). *Children's literature in the elementary school* (5. ed. ed.). Harcourt Brace College Publ.

Johnston, R., McGeown, S., & Watson, J. (2012). Long-term effects of synthetic versus analytic phonics teaching on the reading and spelling ability of 10 year old boys and girls. *Reading & Writing*, 25(6), 1365-1384. <https://10.1007/s11145-011-9323-x>

Lázaro Ibarrola, A. (2007). Enseñanza de la lectura a través de phinics en el aula de Lengua Extranjera de Educación Primaria. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10481/31625>

Levis, J. M., & Grant, L. (2003). Integrating Pronunciation Into ESL/EFL Classrooms. TESOL Journal, 12(2), 13-19. <https://10.1002/j.1949-3533.2003.tb00125.x>

Pourhosein Gilakjani, A. (2011). A study on the situation of pronunciation instruction in ESL/EFL classrooms. Journal of Studies in Education (Las Vegas, Nev.), 1(1) <https://10.5296/jse.v1i1.924>

Russell, D. L. (2019). Literature for Children.

White, T. G. (2005). Effects of systematic and strategic analogy-based phonics on grade 2 students' word reading and reading comprehension. Reading Research Quarterly, 40(2), 234-255. <https://10.1598/RRQ.40.2.5>

Wyse, D., & Goswami, U. (2008). Synthetic phonics and the teaching of reading. British Educational Research Journal, 34(6), 691-710. <https://10.1080/01411920802268912>