

DRAMA THROUGH PUPPETS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

Didactic Unit

Summary:

Based on a study of how drama can be used in primary schools, and specifically puppets, this project has been dedicated to the design of a didactic unit where the first aim is to introduce a different kind of communicative activities into schools.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

The main aim of this project is to provide a view of how to use drama, especially puppets, for teaching English to children in Primary education. I will analyze the advantages of using drama with children and then I will present a story that can be performed with puppets.

Using drama with children is a good idea because of the following reasons:

- Children are good imitators.
- They are not frequently embarrassed to perform in public.
- They love to enjoy the activities that their teacher has prepared for them.

All of this makes easy to maintain a high degree of motivation in the English class as well as making it an enjoyable and stimulating experience. (Phillips 1993:7)

Therefore, I will make use of the advantages of drama, especially puppetry, to create a complementary activity in which children will participate, to improve their knowledge of English and their communication skills.

2. DRAMA AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

One of the most important things when teaching English is to reinforce the idea that we always learn a language to communicate with people. In the practice, teachers should look for something useful and motivating which can help us to teach the foreign language to children in a meaningful way.

Drama is a valuable resource to improve our students' linguistic skills and communicative competence. Drama should be viewed as a technique of communicative language teaching (Wessels 1987). We shouldn't consider it as something that children just enjoy but also as a powerful resource which can be used to improve the student's skills when learning English.

As Pérez Valverde says, "A particular curricular area in which drama has an effective role to play is that of language teaching, if introduced into everyday lessons and used as extra-curricular activities, in as much as students are exposed to communicative situations in which the messages exchanged are fully contextualized".

The advantages of drama are not just to provide a wide range of authentic situations, since “alternative possibilities open up if we appreciate that drama like all art operates in the realm of the “unreal” (Fleming 1998:149). The most powerful advantage that children have is their imagination. So if we make a good use of it, we will obtain better results. And that’s exactly what we do if we work through drama. Children learn without noticing and enjoying everything they do. There is an opportunity to participate for every of them in the activities which involves drama.

According to Wessels (1987:9), “drama can generate *a need to speak* by focusing the attention of the learners on creating drama, dialogue or role play or solving a problem”. The first step to create a useful learning of the language is to make in our students the necessity to speak. As Shackleton (1985:11) says. “Drama stories are made to make people laugh or think – or both- and yet, quite naturally and realistically, they employ language which foreign learners will need to recognize or use when expressing themselves in English. [...] The genuineness of the language and the dramatic situation are recognized by the student and the imaginative response is immensely rewarding”.

3. PUPPETRY

Drama can be implemented through many activities, such as role plays, dialogues..., but in my opinion, what children really love are puppets, especially in the early years of Primary education. The same puppet can be used throughout the whole year to teach them whatever is needed, to tell them a beautiful story, to ask them how they are or just to distract them a little bit. This will make children to identify it as their classmate and they will enjoy every activity purposed.

Children love puppets because they are charming and this is one of the reasons that make them successful. They feel closer than with a simple theatre. Children often reflect their selves on puppets and this can provide the teacher educative and therapeutic values.

Puppets can be easily made for them and it is something which pertains to them in a relative way. A puppet can be their friend or their classmate, a brother or a sister... but at the same time is the child who moves the puppet. This is going to be the key thing while practicing another language and, if we use them correctly, they

are one of the best resources that teachers can find and use in their foreign language classes.

4. CONTENTS OF THE UNIT

a. CURRICULAR CONTEXT

This project can be developed in every school. The typology of the school doesn't affect to the development of the activity and there is no need of any special building to do them. The unit can be developed in the playground or in an empty class.

There is no necessity to pay for the materials that are going to be used in the activity (if we are in a low-class school) because they can be re-used or recycled. In this way we will reinforce the idea of the reutilization of the materials to have fun and learn how to recycle at the same time.

b. STUDENTS'S CHARACTERISTICS

This unit is directed to 3 and 4 grade of primary education students. It can be also directed to younger and older students by adapting the stories which are going to be provided for them according to their levels of knowledge.

c. CURRICULAR DESIGN

i. THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK

The common European Framework for languages describes what language learners have to learn and the knowledge and skills they have to develop to communicate with a foreign language.

If we are going to apply this project to a 3,4 grade our students will be preparing a A1 level of the English language but they will obtain this level once they finish the primary education.

What the CEF (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment: 27) expects for the primary education level is:

Listening: “I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly”

Reading: “I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.

Spoken interaction: "I can interact in a simple way provided the other person in prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics”.

Spoken production: “I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know”.

Writing: “I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form”.

At the same time, the CEF says that there are some competences which should be developed. Those are:

General competences: consist in particular of their knowledge, skills and existential competence and also their ability to learn. (Madrid, D, y Ortega Martín, J. L. 2006 & Madrid, D. and McLaren N. 1997)

Declarative knowledge: It implies the learning of concepts, principles and rules that are stored in the long-term memory in the form of cognitive units.

Procedural knowledge: skills and knowing-how depend on the ability to use the concepts and principles that have been learned in several contexts and situations.

Attitudinal or existential competence: The communicative ability also depends on individual personality traits, attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs and cognitive styles (—savoir-êtrèll)

Ability to learn: This competence enables learners to deal more effectively and independently with new language learning challenges.

Communicative language competence: can be considered as comprising several components: *linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic*. Linguistic competences include lexical, phonological, syntactical knowledge and skills and other dimensions of language as system. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the sociocultural conditions of language use. Pragmatic competences are concerned with the functional use of linguistic resources, drawing on scenarios or scripts of interactional exchanges and it also concerns the mastery of discourse, cohesion and coherence, irony and parody.

ii. THE SPANISH CURRICULUM FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

The LOE (Ley Orgánica de Educación) in 2006 currently represents the new regulation of the Spanish education system and includes its minimum teaching requirements in the R.D. 1513/06, which are specified for the different regional governments in different degrees.

Children now have to develop eight basic cross-curricular competences and they will work new contents that have important effects on the teaching/learning of foreign languages.

The main components of this new curriculum are (in Ortega, 2010):

- Basic Competences,
- General stage goals,
- Specific Objectives,
- Contents,
- Methodological criteria,
- Criteria for the attention to diversity, and

- Assessment criteria.

d. LESSON PLAN

i. UNIT OBJECTIVES, CONTENTS, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Level: 3,4	Timing: 6 hours	Sessions: 6	Topic: Use of puppets
Objectives			
<i>Unit Objectives</i>		<i>Stage Objectives</i>	<i>Basic Competences</i>
Understanding and producing words and short sentences based on the story		1, 2 and 9	Linguistic competence
Working in groups and with the whole class the activities presented.		2,6 and 7	Learning to learn Autonomy and personal initiative
Fostering communication activities through the introduction of drama activities		1,2.4,5 and 9	Cultural competence Linguistic competence Learning to learn
Improving the students' pronunciation and make easier the process of the language learning		2,5,7,8 and 9	Linguistic competence
Showing a receptive attitude and confidence in		7 and 8	Learning to

one's ability to learn and use the foreign language		learn Autonomy and personal initiative	
Contents			
Block 1 Listening and speaking	Block 2 Reading and writing		
<p>Listening to the story.</p> <p>Knowing and using the new vocabulary presented.</p> <p>Representing the story by themselves with the help of the teacher if necessary.</p> <p>Presenting another story to the class and other classes.</p> <p>Representing the story to the student's families.</p>	<p>Read the story comprehensively and aloud.</p> <p>Understand the new vocabulary presented.</p> <p>Write the new vocabulary and expressions showed in the story.</p> <p>Write another story to act out with the class.</p>		
Block 3 Knowing the language through its use			
Linguistic competence			
Functions	Grammar	Vocabulary	Phonetics
<p>1. Read and understand a puppet story.</p> <p>2. Make our own puppets for the story.</p> <p>3. Represent the puppet story with other classmates</p>	<p>1. Verbs in past and irregular verbs.</p>	<p>1. Animals (wolf, pigs)</p> <p>2. Building materials (straw, wood bricks).</p> <p>3. New verbs: blow down, to be hungry,</p>	<p>/aʊ/ House Mouth Mouse Brown Clown</p>

<p>4. Look for another story or write a personal story.</p> <p>5. Represent the personal story.</p> <p>6. Create our puppet portfolio.</p>		<p>fall down, jump down, climb up, run away...</p>	<p>Sound</p>
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Block 4 Socio-cultural aspects and intercultural awareness

1. Showing respect with people who speaks a different language and have different customs from us.
2. Showing interest about how things can be named in other languages.

Attitudes

1. Children must assume favourable attitudes with the use of English as a mean of communication inside the classroom and outside it.
2. They must develop attitudes which lead to the conservation of our own culture in relation to our classroom and our school as well as other classrooms and other schools.
3. Becoming convinced that comprehension does not necessarily involve understanding all the elements of the given text in this unit.
4. Showing a favourable disposition towards the independent reading of short texts related to the classroom and the school.

Learning to learn

1. Respecting turns
2. Judging one's own knowledge and progress
3. Language and communication awareness: when taking part in the pre-planned linguistic and communicative activities.
4. General phonetic skills: ability to discriminate sounds stress and intonation patterns.
5. Study skills: strategies used to learn the concepts and principles explained in this unit
6. Heuristic skills: using the Internet for specific information.
7. Metacognition: analysis and reflection on routines and instructions in relation to the

activities provided.

Evaluation criteria

1. Be able to participate in oral interactions where there is a communicative situation that is predictable.
2. Be able to identify specific information.
3. Be able to write simple sentences or words using models.
4. Be able to use simple patterns of rhythm, sounds or intonation in different contexts.
5. Be able to use strategies where students can learn to learn: using the dictionary/Pictionary, look for specific information, using gestures or asking for clarifications.
6. Be able to value the foreign language as a communication resource with other people.

ii. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND TASKS

I will present the story “The 3 little pigs” story (adapted by Philips 1993)..

1. The first part of my work will be to tell the story. I will use puppets to keep the children’s attraction and motivation.
2. Then, we will work with the new expressions and the new vocabulary which the story introduces.
3. The third part will be to ask the children to make their own puppets with card and dipsticks. The teacher will provide them a model of each character from the story to facilitate them the task.
4. We will make groups of 4. They will have time to learn how to interpret the story and they will present it to the rest of their classmates.
5. It will be proposed to show a similar story by themselves and to show it to their classmates. The teacher will guide them through this activity.

6. Finally, the students will make a portfolio with their stories and with the puppets they have made.

In this way, they will perform the story they want to whenever they like and at the same time they will be working with the vocabulary, the expressions and the pronunciation of the words which have been worked through the stories.

iii. METHODOLOGY

The methodology applied in this project will be related with the communicative approach.

The communicative approach refers to the theories about the nature of language and language learning that serve as the basis for the principles and techniques of language teaching known as the communicative method. (Madrid & McLaren 2004:316)

This method is based on "*Language for communication*". The student goal is to acquire "communicative competence". (Madrid & McLaren 2004:89)

The techniques used in the communicative method are intended to give practice with production and understanding of language functions.

The activities worked in class should offer opportunities of interaction between the students and with this work, I pretend to foster communication in the early years of primary education.

Therefore, the tasks included tare oral and try to make the students to participate in them starting with a story and a presentation which will motivates them to continue in the development of other activities related with the oral communication.

iv. ATTENTION TO DIVERSITY









Puppets can be used for whatever but first, children have to learn how to use them. As it has been said before, puppets are not just for enjoying but a way of learning.

In my case, English language teaching, my purpose is to use puppets to teach and improve communicative skills helping the most reticent children to participate in the activities proposed.

Children will identify the activities as a game with their classmates. They will be encouraged to look for other stories and to perform them with the class or with the family. At the same time they will be learning the use of the language, new expressions commonly used in stories, basic vocabulary and the use of the grammar.

Every child will help his/her classmate to be integrated in the group. Now it's the time to foster the participation of those who have no much attention of his/her classmates. The climate of the class needs to be calm and the teacher has to make the students respect the other and to value everyone's effort and work.






v. MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

-  Story
-  Puppets
-  Paper and card
-  Dipsticks
-  Glue
-  Scissors
-  (Optional) A little theatre to represent the story
-  (Optional) It can be used music to acclimate the stories.

vi. UNIT EVALUATION AND GRADING CRITERIA

The teacher will write down notes in every session, about the development of the activity in a form that, at the end of it, she/he will have a general view of what has been difficult or well understood in the class as well as notes of the children's behaviour.

Furthermore, there are some other aspects which will influence:

-  Knowledge of the vocabulary presented in the story.
-  Interest showed during the development of the story.
-  Acting out of the story suggested.
-  Verification of how the puppets of the students have been made.
-  Annotations taken during the development of the project.

- 👏 Presentation of other story.
- 👏 Order and presentation of their portfolios.

GRADING CRITERIA

Knows the vocabulary presented (0-10)	Shows interest and tries to participate Yes/So,so/No	Puppets (0/10)	Second story	Students' evaluation 5/10	
0-3	No	0-3			Keep trying
3-5	So, so	3-5			You're progressing
5-8	Yes	5-8			You're good
8-10	Yes	8-10			You're excellent

In this way, every child who participates and, for example, presents another story, shows interest for the development of the activity and also has good puppets will be an excellent learner. This is not so difficult. I want to motivate children to improve their English and to make them know that it is not difficult to learn English at the same time that we enjoy it.

However, there can be also modifications and adaptations of the evaluation and grading criteria if required.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND DIDACTIC SUGGESTIONS

1. SESSION

The story "The three Little Pigs" by Sarah Phillips will be presented to the students.

I will provide the patterns for the puppets and the materials to make their puppets for the story.

When they finish the puppets, they will have a copy with the story written to read and circle the new words as well as look for them in the dictionary if they

do not know the meaning. This will be included in their portfolio once it has been finished the development of the unit.

Faster students will be grouped to practise the story with the puppets.

Slower students will be asked to finish the puppets at home but they have to pay attention to the story script and the meaning of the words.

2. SESSION

This session will be dedicated to prepare the acting out of the story “3 little pigs”.

The students have to be ready in order to represent it. For this, they have to act the story out more than once, they have to pronounce every word and be sure of its pronunciation too. They have to be synchronized with the steps of the story.

The students will be grouped as they were in the previous session, and sat in a particular place of the class separated from the other groups. This is because they will need concentration and a determined silence from the rest to be focused on his/her acting out practise.

The teacher will be helping them group by group. The teacher has to check that everything is going well and write down all the information for the evaluation.

The teacher has to reinforce the main actions and puppets movements that have to be showed in the play during the performance to the students. This is very important because children have to understand that the every play needs a good interpretation and every little detail will influence the final play.

3. SESSION

All groups will act out the story “3 little pigs”.

During the class the students will vote to every group performance in a paper. In this case, the evaluation of the students will be taken into account when the teacher makes the final evaluation of the unit.

The teacher will make the students to participate when evaluating this activity. They will act as a jury. Every group will have a spokesperson and a paper (see

annexes) to evaluate the other groups. They can't give bad results because everyone is going to participate and that's the important thing that we want to promote.

Finally, the students can be re-grouped if they want to, with the purpose to make their own puppet story (or adapted one) and to act it out in the class by the next session.

If they don't want to be re-grouped or to re-group the children is complicated, they will maintain the same groups as before.

It is important to show that the next activity is "optional" but they have to see that is good to participate and they are going to have fun with it. Every group should participate so, the teacher, according to the hobbies and likes of every group, will offer a story for every of them.

Those groups interested in the activity presented will be guided by the teacher. The students have to hand in (or tell) the story they want to represent to the teacher and the teacher will adapt it to the students if necessary (vocabulary, grammar and expressions...)

4. SESSION

This session will be dedicated to practise the new stories of every group. As children have done in the previous sessions, they will make their own puppets for the story. They can make them of diverse materials. It is important that every child gets familiar with his/her puppet and his/her story.

During this activity we can play some music in the class to foster the enjoyment and relax them while working.

5. SESSION

The puppet stories which the students have chosen will be practised as it has been done in session 2.

They now are more independent and have their own puppets and scripts of their stories.

Now, the role of the teacher becomes more important. She/he has to supervise every group and advise them to obtain the better results during the acting out of every story.

6. SESSION

Every group will interpretate their own story. As in session 3, the students will evaluate the rest of the groups again.

Children will have time to include the “3 little pigs’ story” in their portfolios and the teacher will also give them the opportunity to have one of the new stories which have been represented.

If there is opportunity, it will be a good idea to represent the story to other classes or to prepare the stories for the end of the year.

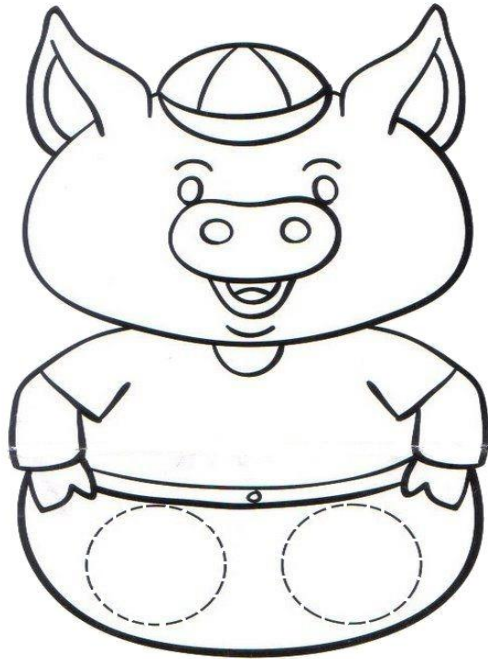
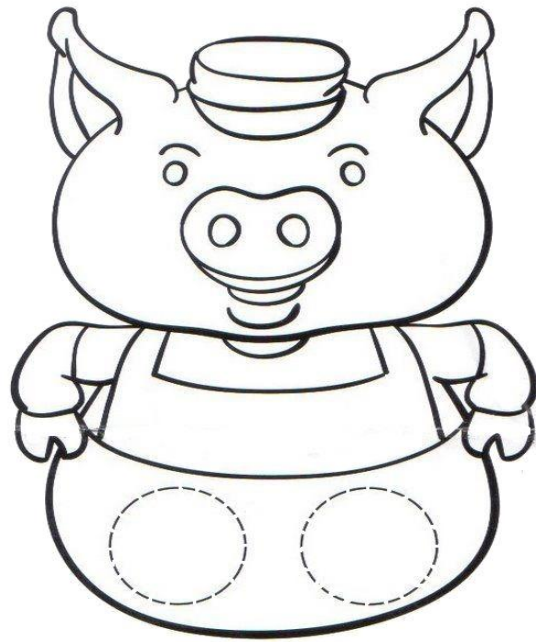
If the teacher can get the permissions of the families, the stories can be recorded and published in the web page of the school.

ANEXXES

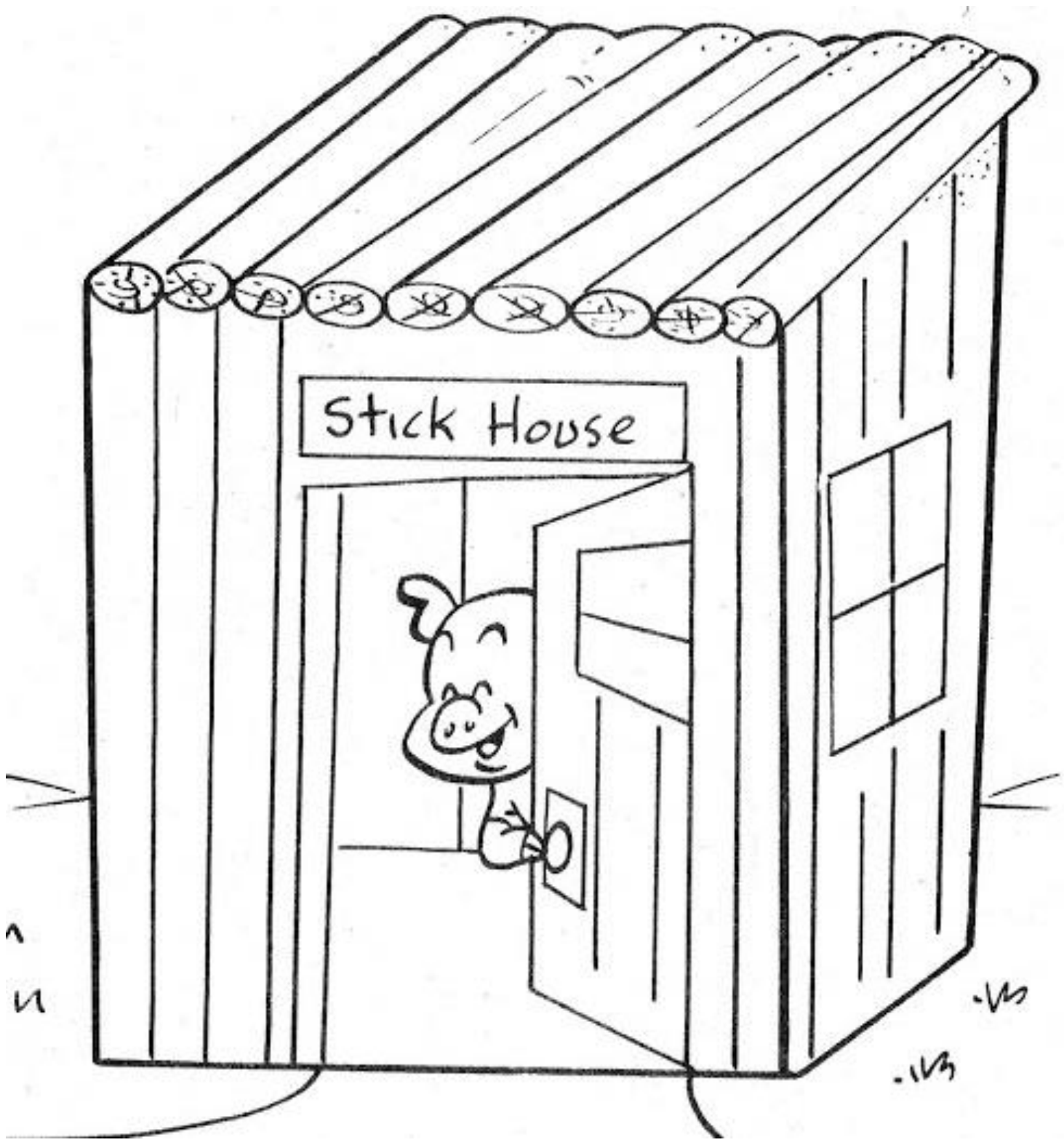
1. Story by Sarah Phillips (1996:45)

“The three little pigs”

- ∅ This is the story of the Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf.
- ∅ The first pig built a house of straw.
- ∅ The second pig built a house of wood.
- ∅ The third pig built a house of bricks.
- ∅ One day the Big Bad Wolf was hungry.
- ∅ He blew down the first pig’s house. The little pig ran to his brother’s house.
- ∅ The wolf was still hungry. He blew down the second pig’s house. The two pigs ran to their brother’s house.
- ∅ The wolf was still hungry. He went to the third pig’s house. He blew and blew, but the house didn’t fall down.
- ∅ He climbed on to the roof and jumped down the chimney.
- ∅ He fell into the fire! Ooowwww! He climbed up the chimney very fast and ran away.
- ∅ The three little pigs lived happily ever after.







Stick House

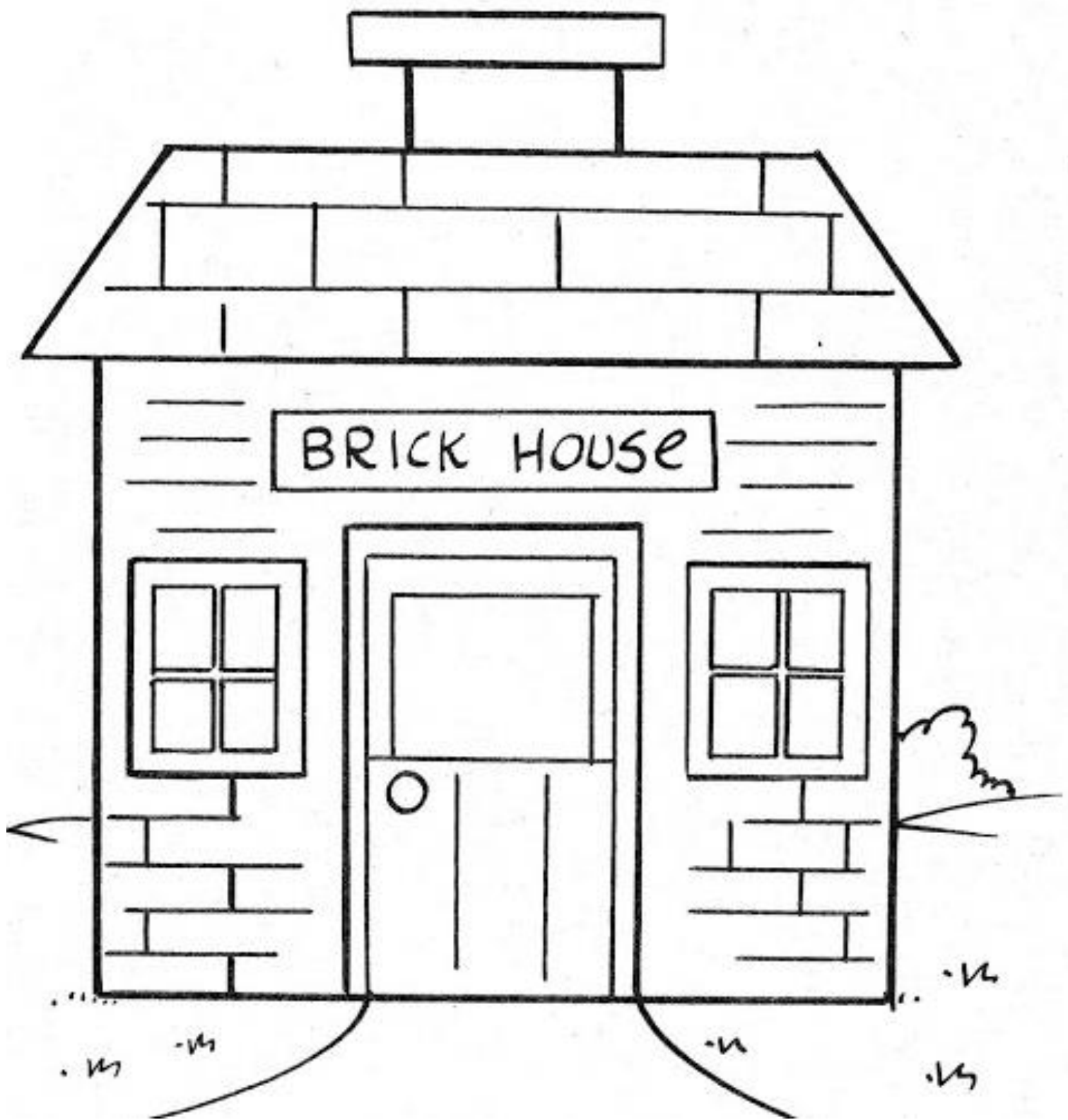


Table for the students' evaluation of the groups.

Use of puppets	Group's evaluation			
	Puppets 5/10	Had the story sense? 5/10	Did you like the story? 5/10	How did the group? 5/10
Group 1				
Group 2				
Group 3				
Group 4				
Group 5				
Group 6				
Group 7				

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The puppets' models have been taken from:
<http://rosafernandezsalamancainfantil.blogspot.com.es/2012/10/los-tres-cerditos-y-el-lobo.html>

The houses' models have been taken from:

<http://pintardibujo.com/pinta-y-diviertete-con-el-cuento-de-los-tres-cerditos>

<http://www.ugr.es/~dmadrid/Tefl/Common%20European%20Framework%20for%20Languages.pdf>

Loyal document consulted:

<http://www.ugr.es/~dmadrid/Tefl/Orden%20que%20establece%20el%20Currículo%20de%20Educación%20Primaria.pdf>

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf

This sample unit has been consulted (17/06/14)

(Adapted from: Madrid, D, y Ortega Martín, J. L. (2006): Teaching Practice Workbook for Language Teachers. Granada: Grupo Editorial Universitario, pp. 83-106, and from Madrid, D. and McLaren N.

http://www.ugr.es/~dmadrid/Masters/Master%20Secundaria/Enseñanza_aprendizaje/Sample%20Unit-Grade%201%20Secondary%20Education.pdf