

# MASTER'S FINAL DISSERTATION

## Teaching and Learning English in Early Childhood and Primary Education

2016-2018

### *Reading Buddies:*

Further steps in English as an additional language  
to promote reading and speaking through *cross-  
age tutoring*

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Date: June 20th

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## **Abstract**

This article aims at describing the characteristics of a successful program implemented in Catalan (“Apadrinament lector”) based on *cross-age tutoring* and adapt it to reading comprehension and speaking in English as an additional language (*Reading Buddies*). It has as aims describe *Reading Buddies* and its benefits for the promotion of reading and speaking, identify the concrete aspects that might change when adapting the program in English, describe a real *cross-age tutoring* implemented in Catalan in Escola Santa Anna (Barcelona) and make the new proposal for this school in English. The results say the adaptation of the program from Catalan to English makes the educational proposal more precise and in turn increases the benefits of *cross-age tutoring*, which can thereby improve reading and speaking skills and fluency in English.

## **Keywords**

*cross-age tutoring*, *Reading Buddies*, reading comprehension, oral fluency, English as an additional language, Primary Education

## **Resum**

Aquest article vol treure el màxim profit de les característiques d'un programa d'èxit implementat en Català (Apadrinament lector) basat en la *tutoria entre edats diferents* i portar-lo a la falta de comprensió lectora i parla en Anglès com a llengua adicional. Té com a objectius descriure *Reading Buddies* i els seus beneficis en la promoció de la lectura i la parla, identificar aspectes concrets que poden canviar a l'hora d'adaptar el programa en Anglès, descriure un cas real de *tutories entre edats diferents* implementat en Català a l'Escola Santa Anna (Barcelona) i fer la nova proposta per aquesta escola en Anglès. Els resultats mostren que l'adaptació del programa del català a l'anglès fa la proposta educativa molt més precisa i a la vegada augmenta els beneficis de la *tutoria entre edats diferents* i d'aquesta manera derivar en la millora de la comprensió lectora i l'expressió oral en l'anglès.

## **Paraules claus**

*tutoria entre edats diferents*, *Reading Buddies*, comprensió lectora, expressió oral, Anglès com a llengua adicional, Educació Primària

## Introduction

“Apadrinament lector” is a successful program carried out in Catalan in many primary schools of Catalonia. The general concept of this program comes from “padrí o padrina” (godfather and godmother) a figure that represents *escort or accompaniment*. If a “padrí/na” strives to become a reference of a child understanding, motivating, encouraging, dialoguing and concerning, the young children will receive huge benefits in his/her development as a person” (Escolan, 2014). Thus, if that concept is applied in the school contexts teachers popularly talk about a program in which an older student becomes a model for the young one to help to develop the learning process, concretely reading skills in one school year.

Therefore, “Apadrinament lector” is a very well-known program inside the primary education schools in Catalonia and it is mainly carried out in Catalan language. Taking the advantage of its popularity, this article goes further and wonders: What would happen if this program was implemented in an additional language? What new aspects would the teacher consider? How different would the new proposal be? Definitely, changing the program into an additional language is a challenge that requires deep analysis. Otherwise, why should teachers apply “Apadrinament lector” in English?

The main reason in that Spain still obtains a sufficient mark regarding the reading comprehension and the oral fluency (EF EPI, 2018). This is due to the fact that the student “orbits” around the teacher considering the learning as teacher’s responsibility. That process does not reflect the reality of learning in the everyday life (Lampariello, 2017). As a solution, Markku Jahnukainen (Department of Teacher Education, University of Helsinki, Finland) propose that “teachers need to change the old habits and create teaching and learning that empower teachers and students” (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016). Therefore, **teachers should implement new methodologies based on the social interaction.**

This article is an educational proposal that attempts to adapt “Apadrinament lector” in English in order to improve the quality of learning in English. These are the goals:

- *Aim 1:* Describe “Apadrinament lector” and its benefits for the promotion of reading and speaking
- *Aim 2:* Identify those aspects that might change for the adaptation of the program
- *Aim 3:* Describe the program implemented in Catalan in Escola Santa Anna
- *Aim 4:* Adapt the program “Apadrinament lector” to English as an additional language

## How English is taught in our society

Most of the time the English language input is mainly given through teachers speaking and text books and there is little time when the students can practice the language. This idea is supported by Lampariello (2017) who claims that most students are passive participants in the language classes. They expect that teacher “delivers” the language result of the classic “teacher-centered” approach -the main source of knowledge- and he/she is the one who decides what to talk about, which material and learning use and the speed of learning. In that period, teachers dedicate part of the class to learning grammar, “filling gaps”, learning new vocabulary and reading as these are the main contents for the international exams. Moreover, “many students find ridiculous learning something that they already know in their language” (Álvarez, 2016).

## New aspects to bear in mind in teaching English

There are several ideas that teachers should take into account regarding new strategies for teaching English as an additional language:

- Neuroscience confirms that social interaction helps to remember better what is learnt. Being with people activates all the areas of the brain as human being is aware of the intentions and emotions of others, what other brings to him/her, how he/she can contribute to not being rejected and how he/she preserves the individuality integrated in the community. Undoubtedly, **the social interaction allows the brain to stock - not more quantity- more quality of data** (Bueno, 2018).
- **Plurilingual competence means finding bonds between languages** not just think in the target language (Esteve and Davies, 2016). Concretely, English and Spanish share a common latin base of 58% and that fact allows to understand a text being a beginner of the English language (Álvarez, 2016).
- Otherwise, teachers should remember that Spanish is a pure language (the way it is said, it is also written) in contrast to English (the way it is said, is not written). Thus, **spelling, listening, speaking and pronunciation should take most of the time of the English classes** (Álvarez, 2016).
- The **reading comprehension skill** seen as being the core in Primary schools as **it is the key to unlock any kind of written text** (Topping, Duran and Van Keer, 2016); also reading provides a context for learning languages, enriching learner’s vocabulary and modelling new language structures for the future (Ghosn, 2001).

- Teaching English signifies challenge due to diversity in the student's linguistic and cognitive levels. Some students speak English as their mother tongue, others participate in extracurricular English activities, others are exposed to original version movies, etc. **Teachers need to find methodologies that do not consider diversity a problem, but a positive aspect to create more opportunities for the children** (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).

Thus, the adaptation of “Apadrinament lector” to English as an additional language has all these reasons a pillars and opens a path of new challenges for the teachers and significant learning opportunities for the students.

### Other programs related to “Apadrinament lector”

There are many programs carried around the world that display the success of the cooperative work in reading. Some of them are: *Read On*, *American Reads Challenge*, *Reading Together*, *Buddy Reading*, *Paired Reading* and *Reading in Pairs* (see Appendix 1) (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016). These programs share a common interaction between how teachers teach and how students learn far from the teacher-centered methods, but at the same time each program is named different due to the goals and context of their society. Taking into account this great diversity of names and after talking to teachers with experiences in such programs, from now on the name that will be used in this article for the English adaptation of “Apadrinament lector” will be called ***Reading Buddies***.

Moreover, among the programs mentioned, *Reading in Pairs* (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016) is going to be especially considered as its design has been thought for learning English as an additional language. This program was originally called *Llegim en parella* and its adaptation in English was tested in fifteen schools of Catalonia and Navarra during the 2014-2015 academic year school. The results of the programs showed a significant improvement of the development of reading comprehension and oral communication skills in English in students of 9-13 years old.

### What is *Reading Buddies*?

*Reading Buddies* is a program where two or more individuals read together (TeacherVision. *Reading Buddies*). Its starting point is a collaborative methodology and it concretely comes from the strategy *peer tutoring*, which consists of people from similar social groups who are

not professional teachers helping each other to learn and learning themselves by teaching (Topping, Duran and Van Keer, 2016).

Students are grouped in pairs with an asymmetrical relationship and one of them adopts the role of *tutor* (i.e. the more experienced student) and the other one the *tutee* (i.e. the less experienced student). All the pairs act with a common goal, which is achieved through a framework planned by the teacher.

*Peer tutoring* can take many types of peer collaboration, but the most distinguished are those differentiated by the age: *cross-age tutoring* which the oldest student is the tutor and the youngest is the tutee; and *peer tutoring* with students of the same age. (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016). Some authors can refer *peer tutoring* for pairs of different age, but in *cross-age tutoring* is always different (Kalkowski, 1995). Therefore, *Reading Buddies* is a *cross-age tutoring* in which the oldest student is the tutor and the youngest the tutee (TeacherVision. *Reading Buddies*).

### The benefits of *Reading Buddies*

*Peer tutoring* is considered one of the ten most effective practices (Walberg and Paik, 2000) and also it is recommended by many experts such as the European Agency for Special Education and UNESCO (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016). These are some of the most interesting benefits classified as didactic, social and emotional:

#### **Didactic benefits.** *Reading Buddies*...

- Helps to model **good reading habits** on a regular basis and develop greater motivation to read and value reading (TeacherVision. *Reading Buddies*).
- **Improve basic reading skills, oral expression and fluency**, concretely to the tutors (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016), and shows **improvement in the reading abilities in poor readers** by repeating the texts (TeacherVision. *Reading Buddies*, 2011).
- Avoids the simple transmission of information (unidirectional model) and promotes the **bidirectional model** creating opportunities of dialogue, the formulation of questions and elaboration of good answers (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016) through an active role (Lampariello, 2017).
- Allows **tutors** to *teach* by transforming information into knowledge. Tutors control and organize the content using their own mental schemes. They are aware of their

own gaps and detect the tutees' ones. Students become very good at teaching new learners because they share a same framework of experiences and know how to offer support (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).

- Helps **tutees learn** much more thanks to the adjustments and constant help of the Zone of Proximal Development of the tutor (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).
- Allows **teachers to** see how students **learn through their differences**, to provide **immediate feedback** (individual or pair support) and to take notes for the **continuous assessment** (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).

#### **Social benefits.** *Reading buddies...*

- Fosters working in pairs and learn to teach other is something that children appreciate with the help of the teacher (TeacherVision. *Reading Buddies*).
- Consider the **social diversity as an advantage** to create more opportunities for the students (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).
- Develops **commitment, sense of responsibility and improve psychosocial and autonomy skills** especially to the tutor (Walberg and Paik, 2000)
- Creates a **community engagement and accomplishment** for those that have difficulties of reading fluency. Students become familiar with one another and nurture a mutual interest in reading (TeacherVision. *Reading Buddies*).

#### **Emotional benefits.** *Reading Buddies...*

- Creates a **safer environment**. Students are willing to communicate in an additional language as they feel more confident than doing it in an open environment. The atmosphere in pairs tends to be more private and with low-anxiety that promotes talking about personal feelings and experience (Jones , 2007).
- Practices reading through paired students increases **enjoyment, confidence, empathy and self-esteem** (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).
- Gives advantages to the slower-learning students and those with disabilities can be in the position of teaching to others, as it gives the **extra time and practice to master a skill** (Walberg and Paik, 2000).

The benefits are wide, but the success of peer tutoring in school will depend on how teachers precise its organization and operating of the program.

Aspects to take into account when implementing the program in English (Figure 1)

This first grid includes 10 aspects that teachers need to bear in mind for the application of “Apadrinament lector” in English.

1. Goals	Many goals can be considered when applying programs with <i>cross-age tutoring</i> in reading. The programs related to <i>Reading Buddies</i> (see Appendix 1) have showed those differences. Thus, teachers need to decide the <b>goals of the program</b> that will frame the program according to their school context and students needs (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).	P L A N N I N G
2. Age of the students	It is essential to start by determining <b>what grades will participate</b> and <b>what roles each one will perform</b> . During this decision it is essential thinking about the <b>age-difference between students</b> as each grade is in a concrete <i>development stages of reading</i> (see Appendix 2) (Topping, Duran and Van Keer, 2016) and also analyse the <i>emotions</i> that this gap of different <i>cognitive challenge</i> could create as it might cause a lack of motivation (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).	
3. Parings students	When paring students, it should be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First, what roles students will perform: <b>fixed or reciprocal role</b>. Taking into account that <i>Reading Buddies</i> includes <i>cross-age tutoring</i>, a fixed role is much more contemplated (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).</li> <li>- Second, matching students contemplating their similar interests (TeacherVision. <i>Reading Buddies</i>) or similar competences <b>testing or not their reading comprehension and oral proficiency</b> (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).</li> </ul>	



4. Selection of the text	<p>The selection of the text in <i>Reading Buddies</i> involves thinking about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Who selects</b> the text between tutor, tutee or teacher (TeacherVision. <i>Reading Buddies</i>)</li> <li>- The <b>reading level</b> of the text (TeacherVision. <i>Reading Buddies</i>)</li> <li>- The <b>main features</b> of the text (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016)</li> </ul>	
5. Timing	<p>Limiting the time becomes important as it should consider two new lengths (TeacherVision. <i>Reading Buddies</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The <b>length of the interaction</b></li> <li>- The <b>length of the program</b> in the school year</li> </ul>	
6. Pre-interaction	<p><i>Reading Buddies</i> needs much preparation for the students as it is a big mistake trusting that students will immediately teach to each other (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016). That is why teachers have to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First, devote time to an <b>initial training</b> for both grades, as researches on <i>peer tutoring</i> prove that results are better when the roles of tutor and tutee are clear (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).</li> <li>- Second, give time to tutors to <b>prepare the reading</b> before the interaction as tutors need to pay attention to the listening and pronunciation in English (Álvarez, 2016), and tutors becomes a models for the tutees, thus they must know what they are reading and how to read it (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).</li> </ul>	O P E R A T I N G
7. Interaction	<p>Many features can determine the success of reading and speaking skills between tutor and tutee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pre-reading: if there are <b>agreements</b> at the beginning of how the text will be read (Topping, Duran and Van Keer, 2016) and <b>how many times</b> (TeacherVision. <i>Reading Buddies</i>).</li> <li>● While-reading: what are the <b>aspects the tutor corrects</b> while reading (Álvarez, 2016) and <b>tutor's strategies to</b></li> </ul>	

	<p><b>correct tutee</b> (Topping, Duran and Van Keer, 2016).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-reading: if there are <b>reading comprehension activities</b> and what kind of <b>cognitive strategies</b> are promoted to understand the text (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).</li> </ul>	
8. Assessment	<p>Two different kinds of assessment are identified for <i>Reading Buddies</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The <b>general assessment</b> which implies collecting evidences of the results of the students (Topping, Duran and Van Keer, 2016). It is teachers' duty to design the instruments that gather information of the students' learning process.</li> <li>- The <b>self-assessment</b> which promotes the students' awareness of their improvements (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).</li> </ul>	O P E R A T I N G
9. Role of teacher	<p>Working through <i>peer tutoring</i> involves a dramatic change of the teacher's role to be defined and internalised from the very beginning and during the process, as depending on how the activity is carried out it might need modifications (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).</p>	
10. Families support	<p>Families' role may be considered the last important aspect to bear in mind as family participation in schools brings huge benefits to students, parents and the school itself (Reparaz and Naval, 2014); and reading aloud at home is very important for the development and improvement of linguistic skills (Kids and Family Reading Report, 2018).</p>	

Figure 1. Aspects to take into account for the adaptation

## Method

### Context of the educational proposal: Escola Santa Anna

This article is an educational proposal based on the reality of Escola Santa Anna located in Barcelona, Spain. Escola Santa Anna is a semi-private school situated in the neighbourhood l'Eixample, Barcelona. It is a small school of one class per year and from P3 to 4th of ESO. The reading program based on *cross-age tutoring* has the name “Apadrinament lector”. Escola Santa Anna has been selected to participate in this research as it is small school and this year it is the tenth year that the teachers are doing the program. In addition, the teachers who carry out the activity have been very interested in explaining the program and open their classes to make the observations.

### Participants

The participants for this research are:

- The two teachers that carry out the program in Escola Santa, one is the coordinator of Primary and teacher of 1st grade and the other one is the teacher of 6th grade.
- Five pairs of students (five of 1st grade and five of 6th grade) that have been chosen randomly.

### Instruments

The instruments selected to gather the information for the description of “Apadrinament lector” in Escola Santa Anna are:

- One **interview** to the teachers who carry out the program in order to know the goals, organization, management and evaluation of the program.
- Five **observation grids** with the same structure to observe five different pairs (Pair 1, Pair 2, Pair 3, Pair 4 and Pair 5) in order to gather real information of the reading and speaking interaction.

## **Procedure**

The procedure for the educational proposal is:

Firstly, in order to describe “Apadrinament lector” implemented in Catalan in Escola Santa Anna (Aim 3) the structure of Figure 1 in the theoretical framework will be used as a reference, as there are represented the 10 aspects to take into account for the application. The interview to the teachers and the observation of the five pairs will allow to gather information and make a second grid (Figure 2) about the description of the real program implemented in Catalan in Escola Santa Anna.

Secondly, in order to adapt “Apadrinament lector” in English as an additional language for Escola Santa Anna (Aim 4), the structure of Figure 1 and the new information of Figure 2 will be considered again, as both bring the theoretical concepts and the school context to make the adaptation.

Thus, the article follows the same structure as Figure 1, repeating the 10 different aspects three different times to frame each information and not losing coherence throughout the article.

## Analysis: “Apadrinament lector” in Escola Santa Anna (Figure 2)

This second grid includes the analysis of the interview with the teacher and the observations made to five different pairs.

1. Goals	<p>The <b>goals</b> identified in “Apadrinament lector” are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reinforce reading in Catalan in 1st grade</li> <li>- Foster values as cooperation, respect and commitment</li> <li>- Create an affective bound between the members of the pair</li> </ul>	P L A N N I N G
2. Age of the students	<p>The <b>grades</b> who participate are 6th grade as tutors and 1st of Primary as tutees. Thus, their <b>age-difference</b> is six years. Teachers chose these two stages because the older students reinforce the learning process of 1st grade students. As it has been commented in the theoretical framework it becomes important to detect those feeling regarding the <i>cognitive challenge</i> of the activity. This is what it has been observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Greetings, goodbyes and comments:</b> during the beginning and end of the interaction, just <i>Pair 2</i> says a joyful <i>hello</i> and <i>goodbye</i>, the rest tend to say a quiet and fast <i>goodbye</i> (Pair 1 and Pair 5) or nothing (Pair 3 and Pair 4). Also, the comments made around the reading are always made by the tutors (tutees barely have initiative) and all the comments are directly related to the reading (none of them are personal opinions, experience or reflections).</li> <li>- <b>Facial expressions and eye-contact:</b> one the one hand, some tutors seem to be distracted looking at other directions and the clock (Pair 1 and Pair 5), but others feels comfortable looking at the tutee and the text simultaneously (Pair 2) or patient and sweet talking in a very calm voice (Pair 3 and Pair 4). On the other hand, some tutees seem shy reading in a very quiet voice (Pair 5 and Pair 3) and most of them tired after 5 minutes reading (Pair 1, Pair 3, Pair 4 and Pair 5). Again Pair 2 is the only one that looks comfortable and proud looking at the tutor when answering the reading questions at the end of the interaction (Pair 2).</li> </ul>	

3. Parings students	When talking about pairing students, first, tutors and tutees have <b>fixed-roles</b> during the whole school year, basically for their differences cognitive reading skills. Second, teachers consider <b>testing the reading level of 1st grade</b> and classify them in three levels, but it is not relevant with which student of sixth grade will be paired up.	P L A N N I N G
4. Types of reading	<p><b>Who selects the text.</b> 1st grade teachers say: “I am the one who selects the text. We have three folders (green, yellow and red) for the three different levels and inside each one there are eight different texts that children choose from these ones”. The observations say that tutors are the ones who usually choose the text without previously having a look (Pair 1, Pair 2, Pair, 3 and Pair 4).</p> <p><b>The reading level of the text.</b> There are three different learning levels and all of them adapted to tutee’s level. Level one has text of syllables, words and short sentences (Appendix 3. L1), level two text of approx. ten lines (Appendix 3. L2); and level three text of one page long (Appendix 3. L3).</p> <p><b>Main features of the text.</b> The texts are extracted from the Internet, written with handwriting typography and laminated in one page. Each text usually talks about one fiction-topic or nonfiction topic and sometimes there is a drawing that helps to understand the reading. By the end of the course instead of laminated sheets, the teacher brings a box with short books.</p>	
5. Timing	<p><b>The length of the interaction.</b> “Apadrinament lector” is always on Wednesday at 10 o’clock. “For 6th grade students it is their playground time and for 1st grade students that hour is “a break” in the middle of the Catalan subject”. The observations say that pairs interact around 10 minutes (Pair 1 and Pair 4), 15 minutes (Pair 2 and Pair 5) or 20 minutes (Pair 3). “At the end of the school year the interaction can arrive to 30 minutes”, but in some cases “you have to hold them a little bit to make them questions as they finish early” (Pair 3).</p> <p><b>The length of the program.</b> “We start in november and we finish at the end of the school year” (...) “we make some changes regarding the level when they come back from Christmas, as some 1st grade students improve their reading a lot”.</p>	

6. Pre-interaction	<p><b>Initial training of the students.</b> Escola Santa Anna does not do a training. Otherwise, what it is very important is an opening ceremony at the beginning of the school year: “we do a special inauguration with the presentation of each pair and they sign a contract of commitment that involves respect” (see Appendix 4).</p> <p><b>Reading preparation.</b> Students of 6th grade do not need to previously prepare the reading. Teachers state that the activity works as a support for the young readers in Catalan and 6th grade students devote part of their playground time to help them.</p>	O P E R A T I N G  O P E R A T I N G
7. Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pre-reading: Teachers comment that there is not any special organization before reading text to follow, “usually the atmosphere emerges naturally”. Throughout the observations it is confirmed that most of the pairs do not previously reach an <b>agreement</b> as tutees are usually the ones that start reading directly (Pair 1, Pair 2, Pair 4, Pair 5), except in <i>Pair 3</i> that tutor asks to tutee: “Do you want to start?” (Pair 3). Besides, regarding how times a the text is <b>repeated</b>, just <i>Pair 3</i> repeats the same text, the rest of the pairs read one text (Pair 4) or more than one text per session (Pair 1, Pair 2, Pair 5).</li> <li>● While-reading: The following <b>aspects has been identified that tutors correct to tutee</b>: pronunciation of the words like “<i>shoroll</i>” instead of “soroll” (Pair 1) and “<i>ximenia</i>” instead of “xemeneia” (Pair 2); names like “Cervantes”; long words like “internacional” or “coincideix”; dates like “1992” or “23 d’abril” (Pair 3); and when tutee skips lines (Pair 3) or reads fast (Pair 4). Also, the following strategies are made by the <b>tutors when correcting tutees</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Directly correct the words that are mispronounced overlapping tutees reading (Pair 1, Pair 2 and Pair 4)</li> <li>→ Repeat words because tutee reads quietly (Pair 4 and Pair 5)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Point without saying anything when tutee skips a line (Pair 3) or keeping with the rhythm (Pair 5)</li> <li>→ Point and read slowly the word (Pair 2)</li> <li>→ Ask to check if tutee has understood the word: “Do you know what “persevere ” means?” (Pair 4)</li> <li>→ Stop tutee saying: “Wait, wait, there is a comma” (Pair 4).</li> <li>→ Explain about the expression in reading: “Look, when there is a hyphen is because it is said by a character” and “If there is a sign, is because it is a question” (Pair 4).</li> <li>→ Praise when tutee is reading “Well done!” (Pair 2) and during the reading comprehension (Pair 3 and Pair 4).</li> <li>● Post-reading:</li> </ul> <p>Teacher says that tutors do not have to evaluate the <b>reading comprehension</b>. As it has been commented, the laminated sheets have <i>reading comprehension questions</i> after the <i>reading text</i>. However, despite the fact that <i>reading comprehension questions</i> are not compulsory, tutors always ask the reading questions after the reading (Pairs 1, 2, 3, and 4), except <i>Pair 5</i> that read a book. Thus, pairs might need to change the rhythm of the interaction.</p> <p>The <b>cognitive strategies</b> to reach reading comprehension are given through two-three opened questions: “What does Lola have?” (Pair 1), “What day is Sant Jordi” (Pair 3); or four closed questions like “What is a synonym of “arplegar”?” (Pair 4). Tutees answer the reading questions using simple words, but in many cases they do not say anything when do not know the answer (Pair 1, Pair 3 and Pair 4). However, it is remarkable said that the tutors’ feedback of the <i>reading comprehension questions</i> is more active than the feedback during the reading as: praise more (Pair 2, Pair 3 and Pair 4), look for the work in the text and show it to the tutee (Pair 3 and Pair 4), ask “Have you understood what we have read now?” (about the reading question) (Pair 4), and say the first part of the answer as a clue for tutee to complete (Pair 3).</p> <p>Moreover, it is very interesting in <i>Pair 2</i> when tutor invents more questions to increase the tutee’s cognitive challenge by asking: “What is the color of the door? And winters’ color? And chimneys?”. Tutee is able to remember many</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; text-orientation: mixed;">O P E R A T I N G</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; text-orientation: mixed;">O P E R A T I N G</p>
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	<p>characteristics of the text and comparing to the others is very secure of his answers. Tutor says: “Wow! You remember how the house is! I would not remember this!” (Pair 2). Tutor looks happy and surprised and tutee is also happy and proud of his talent. From that moment could be concluded that pairs needs to speak from the <i>reading comprehension activities</i> and feel that they can control part of their learning process.</p>	O P E R A T I N G
8. Assessment	<p>For the <b>general assessment</b>, teachers says: “We don’t use any tool, we do it through observations (...) We already know who is wasting the time and who is showing the attitude in front of the others”.</p> <p>For the <b>self-assessment</b>, tutors make a comment for their tutees at the end of the course, but it is not evaluated: “Before it was written, but now we do it orally”. Teachers also says “6th grade students usually comment the improvement if it is very meaningful, especially when 1st grade start the second term that is when they improved a lot”.</p>	
9. Teacher’s role	<p>During the observations, the following aspects were observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is no direct feedback from the teacher to the pairs.</li> <li>- Teacher asks one time “How was the text?” (Pair 2).</li> <li>- Teacher interrupts in class if there is something new that will change the dynamic (Pair 5).</li> <li>- “Apadrinament lector” works as usual even if the teachers in charge are not at the school (Pair 3).</li> </ul>	O P E R A T I N G
10. Families support	<p>There is no information gathered.</p>	

Figure 2. Analysis: “Apadrinament lector” in Escola Santa Anna

### My Proposal: *Reading Buddies* (Figure 3)

This third and last grid is the educational proposal of “Apadrinament lector” in English as an additional language for Escola Santa Anna taking into account all the aspects for its adaptation in English (Figure 1) and the analysis of Escola Santa Anna (Figure 2).

1. Goals	<p>Simply, the first goal of <i>Reading Buddies</i> for Escola Santa Anna would be changed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Improve reading comprehension and speaking fluency in English</b></li> <li>- Foster values as cooperation, respect and commitment</li> <li>- Create an affective bound between the members of the pair</li> </ul>	P L A N N I N G
2. Age of the students	<p>The students that would participate in the proposal would be <b>9-10 (4th grade) as tutees</b> and <b>11-12 (6th grade) as tutors</b>. For two main reasons:</p> <p>One the one hand, both grades are in the same <i>development stage of reading</i> that allows working on many text elements such as: explore different texts, extract specific information, identify parts of the speech, metaphors or elements of the story, etc. (Appendix 2) (Topping, Duran and Van Keer, 2016).</p> <p>On the other hand, taking into account the observation made and showed that sometimes tutors look distracted and tutees look shy and tired (Figure 2), the new age-difference could increase the <i>cognitive challenge</i> and make both grades feel more motivated. Duran Flores, and Olle support this idea saying that teacher should paired up students which their age difference is not bigger than two years as it could slow down the interaction (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016). Moreover, students would avoid repeating easy contents (Álvarez, 2016).</p>	
3. Parings students	<p>For the new proposal, <b>fixed-role</b> would be considered. However, both members of the pair would <b>be tested in their reading</b> and also <b>speaking skills</b>. Pairs would have <b>similar competence</b> and that could increase the cognitive challenge of the</p>	

	<p>activity to avoid demotivation. Thus, the ones with the highest results would be paired up discreetly, and later teachers would give time to all the students to develop their roles and adjust them to the characteristics of their peers. By doing that, teachers would still consider the social diversity as an advantage to create more opportunities for the students (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).</p>	
<p>4. Types of reading</p>	<p><b>Who selects</b> the text. For the English proposal, all the teachers in charge would select the reading texts, but always responding to the students' interests by asking them in advance (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).</p> <p>The <b>reading level</b>. Teachers would choose reading text appropriate to the students' level, but they would specially take care with selecting texts slightly above the general level of the tutee's reading comprehension (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016). Later it could be considered training the students to choose autonomously the reading texts appropriate to the their reading level (TeacherVision. <i>Reading Buddies</i>).</p> <p><b>Main features</b> of the text. Teachers would increase the range and the attractiveness of texts by extracting information from authentic texts in English like: comics, illustration books, poems, songs, recipes, letters, stories, news, menus, games rules, riddles, plans, schedules, tickets, graphics, posters, maps, ads, flyers, etc. (Guariento and Morley, 2001). By doing that, students would be exposed to "real English" and unconsciously they would connect real language to real world. This would increase motivation and willingness to learn (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016). However, teachers would maintain the idea of having "texts of meaning". That characteristic would be one of the most important ones as <i>Reading Buddies'</i> new goal is that student reaches a good reading comprehension in English. Reading would act as "transmission of ideas" as, on the contrary children would get very frustrated not understanding the text (Guariento and Morley, 2001).</p>	<p>P L A N N I N G</p>

5. Timing	<p>The <b>length of the interaction.</b> Teachers would extend the time to thirty minutes per week because that would allow working on reading during fifteen minutes and speaking skills during fifteen minutes (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016). Later, pairs should take decisions prioritising or reducing the time dedicated to reading or speaking and agreed it with the teacher.</p> <p>The <b>length of the program.</b> The length of <i>Reading Buddies</i> would have the same length as “Apadrinament lector”, but it is recommended to organize the sessions taking into account the phases of the operating part program (the initial training of the students, the progress of the interaction and the final assessment).</p>	
6. Pre-interaction	<p><b>Initial training of the students.</b> For the adaptation in English it would be recommended to have a concrete structured framework of relationship between the role of the tutor and the role of the tutee to not mix what it is expected in “Apadrinament lector” and what it is expected in <i>Reading Buddies</i>. Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera (2016) claim that the results are better, if the task between tutor and tutee is clearer; children must know every time what they have to do. Thus, the period of training would include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meet their pair and get to know each other</li> <li>2. Understand the kind of interaction that is expected</li> <li>3. Practice the reading and the activities or support materials that might structure the sessions</li> </ol> <p><b>Reading preparation.</b> Unlike “Apadrinament lector” in which tutors do not have to prepare the reading, in <i>Reading Buddies</i> tutors would prepare the text in advance as they become the models of the English language. Concretely, <i>Reading in Pairs</i> (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016) makes an interesting proposal by providing to each tutor a <i>reading text</i> together with an <i>audio file</i> making that tutors focus on reading, listening and pronunciation. Apart from the</p>	O P E R A T I N G

	<p><i>reading text</i> and the <i>audio file</i>, tutors would also receive the <i>reading comprehension activities</i> which, at first, would help tutors to comprehend the <i>reading text</i> and later, as a second step, it would guide the comprehension and the speaking part of the interaction with the tutee. By doing that tutors would foster more sense of commitment, responsibility and autonomy and would develop their psycho-social skills (Walberg and Paik, 2000). Thus, reading preparation would involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read the <i>reading text</i> and listen to the <i>audio file</i> paying special attention to the intonation and pronunciation.</li> <li>- Answer the <i>reading comprehension activities</i> to comprehend the <i>reading text</i>.</li> <li>- Being aware of the possible unexpected questions of the tutees</li> <li>- Thinking about other questions to ask to tutees taking into account their interests, knowledge, feelings, etc. (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016) or materials to eager and make much more easy and attractive the interaction (dictionaries, objects, photos, images, etc.) (TeacherVision. <i>Reading Buddies</i>).</li> </ul>	O P E R A T I N G
7. Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Pre-reading:</li> </ul> <p>First, it is essential to establish the habit of greeting. Saying <i>hello</i> and <i>goodbye</i> at the beginning and at the end of the interaction is an easy way to strengthen any relationship (Avella and Lebowitz, 2017).</p> <p>Second, the impact of <b>repeating the reading</b> improves reading fluency, accuracy, word recognition and reading comprehension (TeacherVision. <i>Reading Buddies</i>). Thus, for <i>Reading Buddies</i> it would be good reading the text more than one time. <i>Reading in Pairs</i> (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016) proposes concretely three times (and a fourth for the expressive reading if there is time):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tutor reads first as he/she is the model and has prepared the text. Meanwhile tutee pays special attention to the pronunciation patterns in English as an additional language (intonation, stressed syllables, etc.).</li> <li>2. Both students read the text aloud and at the same time. Tutor models once again, but at this time checking the speed,</li> </ol>	O P E R A T I N G

	<p>pronunciation and intonation of the tutee.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Tutee reads the text aloud and tutor corrects the tutee.</li> <li>4. After understanding the meaning of the text, it is recommended to read for the last time the text focusing on expressive reading as it becomes an opportunity to raise awareness of the progress and praise them (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).</li> </ol> <p>Thus, in <i>Reading Buddies</i> there would not be <b>agreements</b> as pairs would be trained to follow this specific structure. However, when both members are familiarized with the dynamic, they could change a little bit the structure and make it their own.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While-reading:</li> </ul> <p>Considering that in “Apadrinament lector” there is not a strategy agreed and often tutors overlap without giving space to tutees to be aware of their mistakes, setting <b>correcting strategies</b> would increase a better Zone of Proximal Development for the tutee. These are the ones recommended by (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>PPP technique</i> would consist in: tute stops (pause) to give time to tutee to correct the mistakes by themselves -which can be scaffolded- (prompt) and congrats the tutee for his/her efforts (praise). This strategy would be used to correct <b>aspects</b> that Álvarez (2016) proposes like pronunciation, difficult words, etc. and also it would build a better community of accomplishment (TeacherVision. <i>Reading Buddies</i>).</li> <li>- <i>Stop after section</i> would consist in: tutor stops tutee after the end of a section in order to make him/her paraphrase it. That strategy would be used to check if tutee has understood this part of the text or needs a second reading focusing his/her attention to some clues and reach to zero uncertainty.</li> </ul>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; text-orientation: mixed;">O P E R A T I N G</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; text-orientation: mixed;">O P E R A T I N G</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Post-reading:</li> </ul> <p>The comprehension of the text is the objective that most of the children appear to persistently struggle with (Topping, Duran and Van Keer, 2016), but it is the key to get to the knowledge. Observing the pairs in Escola Santa Anna, children take advantage of the reading comprehension questions as they may change the rhythm of the interaction. Underlying again the importance of a guided interaction to reach reading comprehension, the <i>reading comprehension activities</i> become the main resources that regulate the reading and the speaking skills and also the main purpose for reading in pairs (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).</p> <p>Then, taking into account the importance of not dealing with <i>reading texts</i> that break the natural language into small pieces, for instances “gap-filling” (Álvarez, 2016) and also avoiding the simple transmission of information (unidirectional model) (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016). Topping, Duran and Van Keer (2016) propose the next <b>cognitive reading strategies</b> to reach zero uncertainty:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore the characteristic of the text (title, structure, source, etc.)</li> <li>2. Activate prior knowledge (what readers know and not know)</li> <li>3. Make hypothesis at the beginning and check if it is confirmed or rejected during the reading</li> <li>4. Discover the new words and expressions (previously prepared by the tutor)</li> <li>5. Distinguish main ideas from second ideas and details</li> <li>6. Retrieve information explicit from the text</li> <li>7. Interpret the difficult ideas</li> </ol> <p>Thus, <i>Reading Buddies</i> for Escola Santa Anna would have opened/ended-questions of <i>reading comprehension activities</i>, but also activities about highlighting, sorting, relating, making schemes and extracting main ideas. By doing that, the tutee would transform the information into knowledge. In the case of working on grammar and vocabulary, that would be after</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; text-orientation: mixed;">O P E R A T I N G</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; text-orientation: mixed;">O P E R A T I N G</p>
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	<p>understanding the text, as the <i>reading texts</i> always act as a natural framework for the reading learning process. Moreover, the idea of giving a <i>language support</i> would be a good way to foster the speaking when completing the <i>reading comprehension activities</i> (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016). By doing all this, the students would increase enjoyment, confidence, empathy and self-esteem (Miller, 2010).</p> <p>Finally, taking into account the situation of <i>Pair 2</i> when tutor invents more questions to increase the tutee's cognitive challenge making that interaction changes to a meaningful moment, it would be interesting to allow tutors to develop similar materials once they are familiar with the formats, the characteristic and the variety of <i>reading comprehension activities</i> provided by the teacher (Duran, 2012). This would be a new goal of the program and the activities should be always revised by the teacher as the activities could be re-used by another pair (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).</p>	O P E R A T I N G
8. Assessment	<p>As has been said in the didactic benefits of <i>Reading Buddies</i>, the program allows to evaluate pairs in process.</p> <p>For the <b>general assessment</b>, teachers would continue with the observations, but it is suggested using an <i>observation grid</i> to be more specific in detecting the relationship and learning process of the pairs. Recording them could also give the teacher more details of their technique. The <i>reading comprehension activities</i> (made by the teacher or by the tutor) would be part of as the continuous assessment (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).</p> <p>For the <b>self-assessment</b> it is suggested, apart from preparing a comment at the end of the school year, give (every month) a <i>self-assessment guide</i> to each pair to evaluate: the performances of both roles, the reading preparation, the reading comprehension and the correction strategies and the proposal of new reading organizations for the next sessions.</p> <p>Therefore, taking the idea of “Apadrinament lector” of having folders for each reading level, <i>Reading Buddies</i> could have a <i>folder</i> for each pair that could include the <i>reading texts</i> with the <i>reading comprehension activities</i>, the <i>self-assessment guidelines</i> and the <i>language support</i> (if it is needed).</p>	O P E R A T I N G



<p>9. Role of the teacher</p>	<p>These are the dimensions that teachers would consider in <i>Reading Buddies</i> regarding their role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordinate: pair up students according to their competences, set new timing, give a rich variety of <i>reading texts</i> and adapt the resources to the students needs.</li> <li>- Observe: make observations using <i>observation grids</i> that allow “hear the students’ thoughts” in a continuous process.</li> <li>- Monitor: continue intervening always when the situation is needed, help students who have questions (TeacherVision. <i>Reading Buddies</i>), provide feedback in progress (especially during the training process) and guide each pair to new goals (Duran, Flores, Oller, Thomson-Garay and Vera, 2016).</li> </ul> <p>“Teachers should always know where the students are, what kind of errors they may make and help them as fast as possible” (Álvarez, 2016).</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; text-orientation: mixed;">O P E R A T I N G</p>
<p>10. Families support</p>	<p>This is probably the new aspect that <i>Reading Buddies</i> comparing to “Apadrinament lector”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers would make a creative effort to explain the program and its benefits and encourage parents to participate through letters, personal invitations, posters, newsletter or the students themselves.</li> <li>- Families should be also trained to get familiar with the two roles, the <i>readings text</i> and the <i>comprehension reading activities</i>, etc.. bearing in mind that any member of the family can take the tutor’s role, the tutee’s role act as a helper for the comprehension of the text (Corchete, 2014)</li> <li>- Finally, for the final assessment, teachers should take into account the support that each student has received.</li> </ul>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; text-orientation: mixed;">O P E R A T I N G</p>

Figure 3. My Proposal: *Reading Buddies*

## Conclusions

This article has defined the dynamic of *Reading Buddies*, identify its benefits for the learning process of the students and frame a set of aspects for observing and analysing in detail a real case in a Catalan school to make later its adaptation in English. Therefore, all the aims have been accomplished.

The results have shown that from the ten aspects identified in the theoretical framework (Figure 1) all of them change significantly for the new proposal of *Reading Buddies*. It is remarkable, how by changing the goal this affects the other aspects. *Reading Buddies* is based on building reading comprehension and speaking fluency, different from “Apadrinament lector” that mainly acts for giving support to young readers. Thus, *Reading Buddies* expands the time of the interaction, matches the pairs taking into account their competences, trains and gives more responsibility to the tutors, concretes the correcting strategies and the resources used, specifies the reading comprehension activities, values a continuous assessment and considers a new role for the teachers and for the families. Therefore, having more defined aspects in the English proposal multiplies the didactic, social and emotional benefits of *cross-age tutoring* and improves reading comprehension and speaking fluency in English in Spain.

However, some limitations have been identified. First, there is no especial attention to students with special needs and neither to how the new proposal would affect to the general organization of the school. Second, this article is based on an specific school case, though schools could take many of the ideas proposed, but always thinking about their own context. Finally, and probably the most important one, *Reading Buddies* has not been implemented. New goals could be achieved by implementing the program and analysing its success.

Finally, this article wants to encourage teachers to keep believing in their successful projects already implemented in the schools and make them bigger and more creative by connecting them to new challenges. It is not a matter of not being innovative, but a matter of being renovative of what already works in the schools.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1. International programs related to “Apadrinament lector”

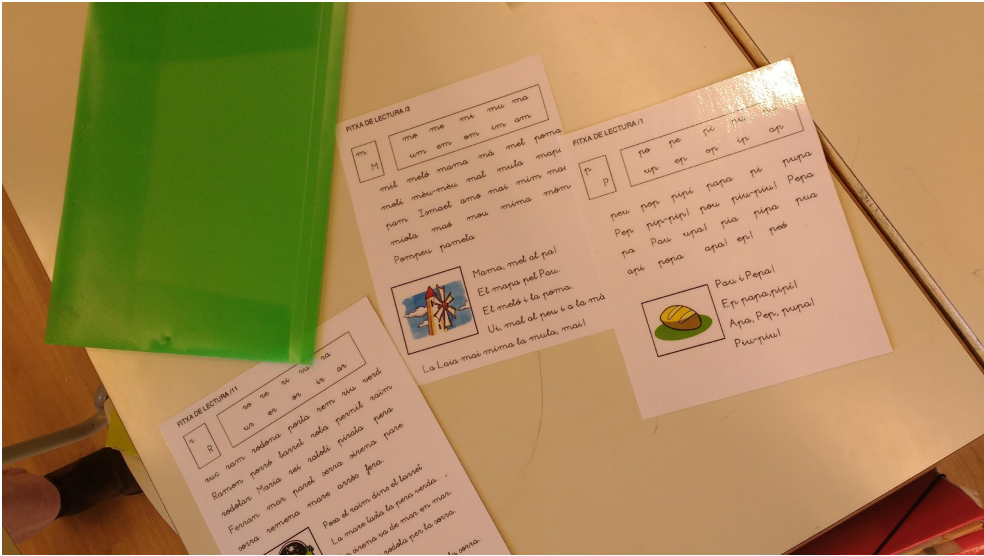
<i>Read On</i> (Topping and Hogan, 1999)	Program that improves reading competence through <i>peer tutoring</i> to stimulate motivation and pleasure in reading, as well as social skills and family involvement.
<i>American Reads Challenge</i> (Wasik, 1997)	Program that promotes the participation of volunteers usually students from secondary or universities who acts as reading tutors in schools training in reading, vocabulary, writing and active listening.
<i>Reading Together</i> (Hattie, 2006)	Program that improves fluency, comprehension and reading motivation with students aged 9 to 10 acting as <i>cross-age tutors</i> of students aged 6 to 7 and developed in United States and Israel.
<i>Buddy Reading</i> (Shegar, 2009)	Program that increases the reading competence of children with reading difficulties using the PPP technic and <i>cross-age tutoring</i> developed in Singapore.
<i>Paired Reading</i> (Topping, 1995)	Program that tutee choices the materials and then pairs are encourage to talk about the book. Tutee usually points at the words and tutor corrects through pausing and praising. Finally they read together and tutors models the difficulties of the text and corrects the previous step of the tutees.

### Appendix 2. Development stages of reading

Age 6-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read familiar stories</li> <li>- Decode unfamiliar words</li> <li>- Use pictures and context to figure it out unfamiliar words</li> <li>- Use some common punctuation and capitalization in writing</li> <li>- Self-correct when they make a mistake reading aloud</li> <li>- Show comprehension of a story through drawings</li> <li>- Organizing details of a story into sequences (beginning, middle and end)</li> </ul>
Age 7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read longer books independently</li> <li>- Read aloud with proper emphasis and expression</li> <li>- Use context and pictures to help identify unfamiliar words</li> <li>- Understand the concept of paragraphs</li> <li>- Correctly spell many words</li> <li>- Enjoy games like word searches</li> <li>- Use new words, phrases or figures of speech that they have heard</li> </ul>

<p>Age 9-13</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore and understand different text (biographies, poetry and fiction, narrative, persuasive text, etc.)</li> <li>- Read to extract specific information, such as science book</li> <li>- Identify parts of the speech and device like similes and metaphors</li> <li>- Identify the main elements of the story (time, place, plot problem and solution)</li> <li>- Read on a specific topic for fun and understand what style is needed</li> <li>- Analyse text for meaning</li> </ul>
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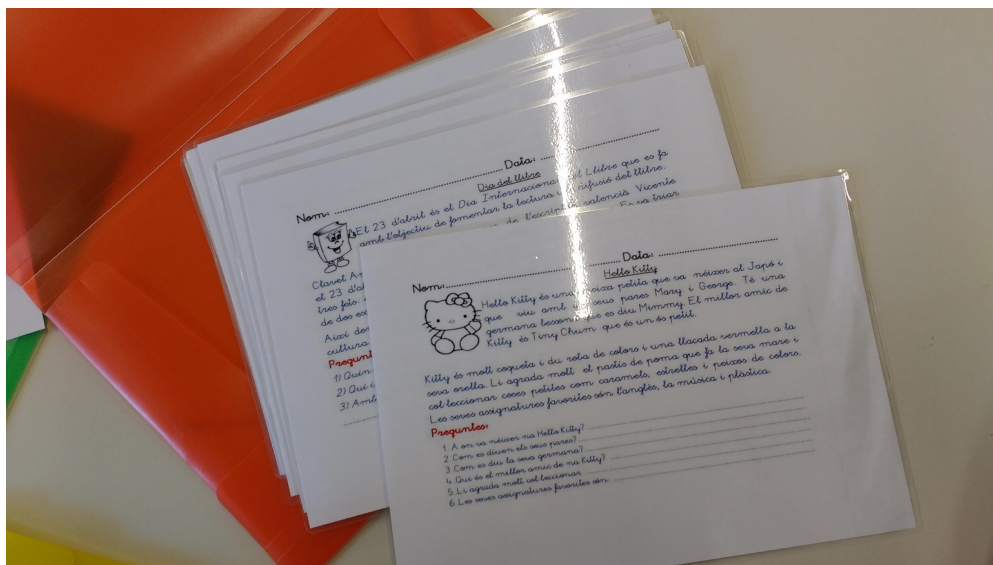
**Appendix 3. (L1 / L2 / L3)**



L1



L2



L3

#### Appendix 4. Contract of commitment

